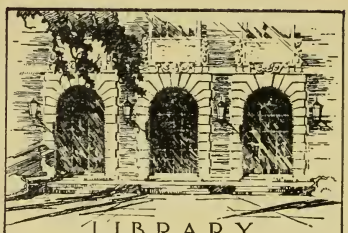
Sum Caroli Whibley

Michael Sadleir



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THE TORY BARONET;

OR,

TORIES, WHIGS, AND RADICALS.

BY ONE WHO KNOWS THEM.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1844.

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THE TORY BARONET;

OR,

TORIES, WHIGS, AND RADICALS.

CHAPTER I.

What say you to young Mr. Fenton? He capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses?

SHAKSPEARE.

A fox spied a bevy of jolly gossiping *girls* making merry over a dish of pullets.

L'ESTRANGE.

Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play;
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.

POPE.

"AND what shall we do to-day, ladies?" asked Lord Swainton, as the happy circle surrounded the breakfast table, discussing dried

salmon and potted wheatears; "the day is fine: you have yet seen but little of Bath, and you may be desirous of doing as every one else does, viz. seeing 'all the World and his wife.' I am told every one is here. Colonel Short-point, Captain Oblivious, and several other of my friends assure me that rank, fashion, beauty, are all pouring in upon us with over-powering profusion, and that Bath has not had such a season for the last twenty years as she will have this winter. Fine eyes, new fashions, splendid toilettes, meet you in every direction, and as the weather is clear and frosty, and the sun shines, the parades will be crowded to suffocation. Beggars description!"

Sir Edward smiled. He could not help thinking that with the thermometer at five degrees below freezing point, and with a fine bracing north-easterly wind into the bargain, there was but little chance of being "suffocated" on the parades, were they ever so crowded; but still he highly approved of a fashionable stroll.

Miss Charlotte replied, "Oh, that will be

delightful, will it not, Sophia? I hope there will be quite a squeeze. I should love to see every one out such a glorious day as this."

Lord Swainton, at the request of the ladies, then offered them the following bill of fare for the day: "Start immediately after breakfast for the Pump-room: spend an hour there. Proceed to the libraries: half an hour there. Call on Lady Muchberry, and insist on her taking a plain family dinner at half-past five that very day, *sans façon et sans cérémonie.* Take a drive in the family carriage for an hour; return to Milsom Street; make some small differences in the toilette; proceed to the parades,—'the' promenades of Bath; return to Milsom Street; prepare for dinner; dine, dessert, coffee, and to the theatre; leave the theatre early; go to the assembly-rooms, where there is a sort of private card and talking party late to-night; take some tea; make a round game, and return home about midnight. There's a day for you, ladies!" added his lordship; "every sort of amusement! Beggars description!"

Sir Edward suggested whether a *billet doux* from his sister to Lady Muchberry sent prior to the call might not more effectually secure her ladyship's society to dinner; and this plan was adopted.

"Now, my lord," said Sir Edward, "do have the goodness to say if you know anything her ladyship likes better than another, for it is quite immaterial to us; and we should be so delighted to accommodate ourselves to her taste, if she accepts the invitation."

"Fish, game, iced champagne, and trifle I know she is fond of. Lord Muchberry kept the best table in England:—green peas in profusion, peck upon peck, at Christmas; finest asparagus I ever saw in my life in February on his table, nearly as large as my wrist; sardines, olives, soles from Dieppe; butter from Normandy as yellow as a guinea with rich cream; trout from the Lake of Leman all the year round. Ten or twelve sorts of wine handed round every day, to everybody. I've seen champagne a solid ball of ice in the hottest days of July at his table. Beggar'd de-

scription! The best table in the universe. But he 's dead."

"I am afraid, my lord, our humble fare will come so far short of the sort of thing you have been describing," said Sir Edward, "that we should almost hope her ladyship would decline instead of accept our invitation."

"She is coming: her ladyship is *so* kind," said Sophia, as she entered the room, bearing Lady Muchberry's reply, "as to excuse our very informal invitation. See, Edward, how charmingly she writes."

"Lady Muchberry is quite impatient to see the Miss Clappertons, that she may express personally what she now does in writing, how much pleasure it gives her sometimes thus to deviate from the rules and observances of polite society, and to accept the more welcome invitations of friendship and hospitality. She is anticipating, however, the promised call, and longs to renew the acquaintance of the Miss Clappertons, their brother, Sir Edward, and their highly distinguished guest."

Lord Swainton was much pleased with the note, and broke out into the following strain in favour of her ladyship.

"The most distinguished woman of the age is Lady Muchberry. Wit, talent, conversation, fund of anecdote quite inexhaustible; converses in five living and two dead languages; danced like a butterfly in a sunbeam twenty years ago; plays the best game of whist now in Bath; knows everybody and everything; can tell you everybody's history, from the time of the first man down to the time of the last; an eye as quick as an eagle's, and a mind so inquisitive that nothing escapes her notice; one of the best dressing women in Europe; has all her *modes* from Paris, and receives weekly reports of the state of fashions; reads everything, sees every new novel before it is published; can talk of France, Greece, Algiers, —every subject interesting to man, woman, or child. Talking of children, she tells the prettiest stories to them in the world: my children, when young, preferred her stories to fruit, flowers, playthings, dolls, toys, cakes, or sugar-plums.

I 've laughed by the hour together at her children's stories. But she has one fault, one little fault,—a habit of 'bouncing.' No one bounces as her ladyship does. I remember her exciting my curiosity to the highest possible pitch about a water wagtail, that she said she had in a cage, and which could sing songs, and whistle airs like a piping bullfinch, and then perform tricks and evolutions like a soldier, sailor, actor, and so forth: all this so excited the curiosity of my children, that we went to see the water wagtail, and there was no such bird in her house, and never had been! Beggar'd description to see my poor children stare, when they were told by her ladyship that it was all an invention to please them! Ha! ha! ha! —he! he! he!—wonderful woman, wonderful woman, Lady Muchberry!"

The Miss Clappertons were innocent enough to think, that the latter feature in Lady Muchberry's character might have been improved, or rather omitted, and expressed this opinion to his lordship, who observed in reply,

"It helps to form, however, a *tout ensemble;* her character is sullied by it, and yet would be spoilt without it. It is the excitability of her nature that finds vent in this habit of bouncing. She exaggerates, because she thinks strongly, feels acutely, and acts promptly. Beggars description!"

The morality of this apology was neither adopted nor approved by the Clapperton family, but "it was no affair of theirs" to discuss it, especially when her ladyship was to introduce them into the best circles of Bath.

The day, according to Lord Swainton's programme, commenced with the Pump-room. His lordship gave his arm to Miss Charlotte, whilst Sophia and Lucy were under the protection of Sir Edward.

"Who is that pale pretty woman, my lord?" asked Charlotte of his lordship as they entered the Pump-room.

"She goes by the name of Niobe," he replied; "for she is the most sensitive creature in the universe. I have known her drowned,

literally drowned, in her own tears. She is pale with weeping, cold as death, and has sorrow succeed to sorrow with the rapidity of clouds in a high wind. Her sorrows are sometimes trifles;—trifles to us, at least, but not to her. When her husband died, she wept like a child for a week at least, and so she did when she lost her French poodle. But I thought she would never recover the death of her favourite cockatoo. Poor Lady Wilhelmina Maddocks! she is the most sensitive being in the world. I will engage to make her weep half-a-dozen times in five minutes."

"Good day, Lady Maddocks," said his lordship, as he approached her. Sad news this! Deplorable news indeed."

"Why, what news, my lord? what news?" inquired her ladyship, in an agony of ready-prepared sorrow.

"What, have you not heard the dreadful intelligence from Bakewell?"

"From Bakewell, my lord? why I have a distant family connexion residing at Bakewell. Surely he has not made away with himself!

Dreadfully nervous creature! I tremble to ask. I am prepared for the worst. Deplorable news! eh, my lord? really it's a sad thing for his poor wife and children; but what can they do? Sweet girl their eldest child;" and then Lady Maddocks could suppress her grief no longer, but began her lachrymose habits with something like enthusiasm.

"No, Lady Maddocks," replied his lordship, "you are mistaken; you are exaggerating the evil. Heaven knows it's bad enough as it is; but you are augmenting it without cause. It is not your family connexion of whom all the world is now talking, but a very different affair altogether. You know Lady Bailey?"

"To be sure I do," said Lady Maddocks. "So she's dead at last! Oh, how sorry I am! She was so amiable;" and then her ladyship commenced a new act in her weeping drama.

"No, no," replied Lord Swainton. She is not dead — but her French poodle, the one she left behind her."

For a moment Lady Maddocks seemed relieved; but the paroxysm of grief soon returned,

and she sobbed with grief, "Poor Lady Bailey! poor thing! Lost her dog! lost her poodle!"

The Miss Clappertons were enchanted with the Pump-room. It was at once so new and so delightful an idea to them to be amused in the morning. They were not wholly strangers to evening enjoyments and nocturnal festivities; but to have music before noon, and public society all day, did indeed, even in their opinion, "beggar description!" As to Lucy, "she was in raptures," and "wondered how any one ever could live anywhere else in the world, when there was such a place as Bath to reside in."

"Ladies, I am in an ecstasy to see you once more," said Lady Muchberry, as the family of the Clappertons entered the drawing-room; "Sir Edward, pray be seated; and you, my lord. Well, this is very kind of you all, to think of me, indeed, and call so early, and ask me to join your merry party to-day both at the dinner-table and the theatre: I am quite enchanted."

"It is for us to express our pleasure, my lady," said Miss Charlotte, in her very best manner. "I assure you we feel it necessary to apologise for the note of this morning; but Lord Swainton was good enough to say that he thought you would excuse it."

"I think so, indeed," replied her ladyship; "nothing you know I love so much as sincerity. Openness of character, devotedness of heart, and enthusiasm of feeling,—these always were my greatest delights. *N'est-ce pas*, my lord?"

"Oh yes, indeed," responded his lordship; "I knew you would scold me for saying what I have done of your ladyship this morning to the Miss Clappertons; because, though you love truth, adore truth, I may say, about everybody and everything else, you will not allow your friends to speak all the truth of you."

These compliments would have extended to a much greater length but for the arrival, at rather an extraordinary hour for paying visits in Bath, of Lord Nonpareil.

Lord Nonpareil was a bit of a beau of Lady

Muchberry's, and every one knew it; but yet Lord Nonpareil had a wife to whom he might have paid more attention than he did, and who revenged herself for his lordship's inattention by taking to herself a beau too, a much younger man than her own legitimate spouse. These mutual arrangements led, however, in the end, to a cause in the Arches Court of "Nonpareil v. Nonpareil," in which Lady Muchberry's name figured some years back with no very enviable notoriety. His lordship, at the time referred to, was a staunch supporter of Whig principles, looked forward to "a blow up in France" with much satisfaction, and made divers little wagers of five pound notes that his friends the Whigs would be in office before the end of the year, and that in such case — of course he would not be forgotten. Although Lord and Lady Nonpareil were duly divorced, *de mensa et thoro*, they had not the right to marry again; for the mutual peccadilloes of the parties in question were of such a nature as to render it improbable that an Act, if applied for by either

party, and opposed by the other, would have been passed. So, Lord Nonpareil, who was about fifty, consoled himself with the society of the married, unmarried, young and more advanced in years, and was pre-eminently attached to Lady Muchberry, not for the sake of herself exactly, but for the sort of society he met at her house, and the perfect understanding that existed between them.

Lady Muchberry was rather attached to Lord Nonpareil than otherwise; for as he was a hanger-on at most of the Whig houses, from Kensington to the North, he was an admirable man to report to her all the tittle-tattle of that portion of the great parties in England; which said tittle-tattle, when well arranged, adorned and embellished by herself, served to amuse and delight their Tory and Radical opponents. For at the period of which we are writing, there were three distinct parties in the state: no treaty had been entered into between the great O'C—— and the chiefs of the Whig party; but the leaders of the opposition in both houses were divided

into very distinct and, as was then thought, un-amalgamable parties. But there was another reason why Lady Muchberry liked Lord Nonpareil. He looked well; was younger than herself; very much inclined to be handsome; and attracted some attention when he handed a lady into a ball-room, to her box at the opera, or even out of her carriage. Lord Swainton and himself were neither sworn enemies nor sworn friends; and yet they could not be said to be indifferent to each other. When Lord Swainton lost money at play, and paid him what he lost, he always said, "Swainton is the most amusing man I ever met." When, on the contrary, he, Lord Nonpareil, lost, or when Lord Swainton lost and did not pay, then the former invariably declared that, "Swainton was as bad a fellow as ever he met with." Just now Lord Swainton was in favour, for he had paid off an old debt of the last season of twenty guineas, and had also settled his accounts satisfactorily with Lady Muchberry.

"How in the world came you here at this

time of day?" asked Lady Muchberry, as Lord Nonpareil entered the room; "I should as soon have thought of seeing you turn Christmas-carol singer as to have received a call from you before four."

"It is very early for me, certainly," replied Lord Nonpareil, "who have no sort of idea of moving before the earth is warmed for my reception; but the truth is, I called to remind you that you promised a short time since to go to the theatre one of these nights, and as the bill of fare is admirable for this evening, I have come to claim the fulfilment of your promise."

"Oh! I am quite in despair!" said her ladyship. "What am I to do? — what am I to do? Here I have just promised to take a sort of early pic-nic, and all that sort of thing, at Sir Edward Clapperton's; (to whom I have the honour to present you, — Lord Nonpareil, Sir Edward; Lord Nonpareil, this is Sir Edward Clapperton, and his sisters;" all parties bowed;) "and then we are to go to the theatre, and afterwards to the

rooms, to tea and a round game, — quite a gipsy sort of party of pleasure."

"In winter too," said his lordship; "a most delightful one I am sure; just like one of Swainton's admirable hits."

"Well, admirable or not admirable, it is mine; I acknowledge my child,— I own my offspring!" exclaimed Lord Swainton. "Beggars description! and only needs Lord Nonpareil's society to make it perfect."

"I am sure," said Sir Edward, most modestly, "my sisters and myself would feel too happy if our gipsy camp could receive another addition to its inmates."

"You are too good," replied Lord Nonpareil. "I fear that would be quite impossible."

"Why so, my lord?" asked Lady Muchberry, with real or feigned anxiety and surprise. "Have you any engagement? Come, — I want a chaperon, you know, and Sir Edward and his sisters are so obliging as to excuse all forms and ceremonies."

"Well, if it must be so, it must," replied

his lordship; "but at what hour do the witches assemble, and the gipsies put their pot on the fire?"

"We pic-nic to-day at gipsy hour," said Sir Edward, "half-past five, if your lordship can eat so early."

"I 'll do my best," replied Lord Nonpareil; and the Clappertons and Lord Swainton retired.

As he left the room Lady Muchberry took hold of his ear, and shaking it well, said, "You shall be king hereafter."

"Lord Nonpareil is a great Whig," said Lord Swainton, as the Clappertons and himself left Lady Muchberry; "he is acquainted with every secret of every Whig family, from the beginning of the first wig to the end of the last pigtail. Ah! ah! ah!—eh! eh! eh! Beggars description!"

"He is a good-looking man," said Miss Charlotte.

"Not so handsome as Sir Felix Montague," replied Miss Sophia, who remained faithful to primitive attachments.

"Ah, Sir Felix!" chuckled Lord Swainton with evident satisfaction; "I must write to him immediately, Miss Sophia: he is dying with passion,—is a slave to your graces and charms,—aspires to nothing but your smiles, and would be too happy if he thought you viewed him so favourably. He is noble as well as witty, and wealthy as well as good. Indefatigable in his exertions for Sir Edward; attending to all the non-resident voters of Warnstable; preparing them for the approaching moment when the great contest, perhaps, may occur; —devoted fellow, and the wittiest man in England. Beggars description! Ah! ah! Mademoiselle—so you think Sir Felix better looking than Lord Nonpareil? So do I; and who would not? But Lord Nonpareil can introduce you to many admirable Whig families with whom he is familiar. The season opens well. Beggars description!"

Fortunately for Lord Swainton's predictions, the promenades and parades were much frequented on the day in question. The Dovelands and the Weylands, the Pallerstons and

Lady Witchie, Lord Brelbanone and the Marchioness of Fairtown were all talking loudly, and "how-d'ye-doing" everybody; and Lord Swainton came in for his share of recognition. The Miss Clappertons were undoubtedly not suffocated by the squeeze, — but they were quite ravished by the scene; and Lord Swainton, resembling a walking index or register of names, as well as a biographical dictionary, much enlivened the scene by his descriptions of each individual.

Precisely at half-past five, according to appointment, Lady Muchberry and Lord Nonpareil made their appearance at Milsom Street.

"The finest gipsy tent I have camped in for a long time!" said Lord Nonpareil, as he entered the spacious and splendid drawing-room of Sir Edward; "and a fire place too! This must be a patent mode of gipsying with which I am not acquainted; but I will place myself under the protection of the ladies, and run all risks."

"And the most agreeable gipsies, too," said Lord Swainton. "None of your Norwood

gipsies, — none of your wild Bohemians, — none of your red-cloak savages, — none of your stockingless, shoeless, capless, bonnetless gipsies,—but patent gipsies, as well as a patent stove, and a patent tent! Beggars description!"

The promised "pic-nic" was a sumptuous banquet, and Lady Muchberry revelled with delight in every species of vinous and viandish enjoyment.

"By the by, I forgot to tell you," said Lord Nonpareil, turning to Lady Muchberry, "I had a letter from Lord Bourtonbury to-day. He has a great mind to try to get Lord Robert in for Warnstable. They say that old Sir Oscar is about to resign, and that there 's a good opening. He has written to me for my opinion, but enjoins secrecy, and blames his son for not calling on me when he was here the other day."

"He has not the slightest chance," said Lord Swainton. "I know Warnstable well. One Tory and one Whig member, just possible; but two Whigs, impossible. Indeed

there have been great bets made that at the next general election it will return two Tories. But two Whigs! — Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!"

"But has Sir Oscar resigned?" asked Lord Nonpareil: "that is the first question. Because I have heard of his intended resignation for six months past, and it has not yet come, I believe?"

"Oh, no!" retorted Lord Swainton; "I will guarantee you that the electors know nothing of the resignation; for I passed through Warnstable a few days since, and all was as flat as usual."

Lord Nonpareil appeared to be reflecting for a few minutes after this speech of Lord Swainton, and at last said,—

"Come, Swainton, you are clever enough, we all know, to bother a badger; but how in the world could you have been *passing through* Warnstable, unless you landed there from sea, and I have not heard of your marine excursions in that quarter? I think I smell a rat. Have you not a friend who is about

becoming a candidate for Warnstable? If it is not a fair question, I will not press it further?"

"Yes, my lord," said Sir Edward; "his lordship *has* such a candidate, and I am he. May I ask you for your vote and interest?"

"To be sure you may," replied Lord Nonpareil; "I will promise you both — but on one condition, — that you vote for REFORM!"

"Reform!" exclaimed Sir Edward.—"Reform, my lord! Why it is impossible you can be favourable to reform!"

"Oh, for that matter," said Lord Nonpareil, "personally, I don't care one straw about reform, and I never yet saw the man who did, that is to say, if the man was worth two straws himself: but then it is only reform, or the cry for reform that can save us as a party, and the question is one of pounds, shillings, and pence. I state it in this way: — no reform, and we are out of office for another quarter of a century;—reform, and we arrive at power for ten years at least,

if not for a longer period. Every man who respects himself, belongs to a party."

"And mine is the Tory party," said Sir Edward.

"Ah! well, if that's the case, you have an able adviser in his lordship. He knows pretty well their camp, though they have done but little for him in return. They are a sad ungrateful set."

"But as I cannot vote for reform," asked Sir Edward, "may I still hope for your vote and interest?"

"I have neither to give," said Lord Nonpareil; "but if it will be of the slightest use to you, Sir Edward, that I should write to my friend, Lord Bourtonbury, and dissuade him from allowing his son to become a candidate in the event of an election, I will do so with much pleasure. I have no doubt that Lord Swainton has reported correctly what he saw at Warnstable 'when he passed through it,' and will take the facts as he states them."

"That will be exceedingly kind of you,

my lord," said Sir Edward; "and I believe in that case my election may be looked upon as certain."

"And what is your opinion of the chances of the Tory party remaining in power?" asked Lord Nonpareil of Lord Swainton. "Do you not think a general election very probable before next year is out?"

"All depends on the events in France," replied Lord Swainton. "I know the French well. If the expedition against Algiers should succeed, it may save the Polignac administration. If it should fail, it must sink for ever. There is a storm also brewing in Belgium. That fellow De Potter is radicalising the country, and the priests are backing him. Should there be a revolution in France, the cry of "reform" will succeed; and as the Duke is no reformer, he would resign. Then farewell for ten years to our party! But it will appear again, stronger and healthier than ever."

"But, my lord," replied Lord Nonpareil, "are not the people of this country tired of a

Tory administration, as they would in ten years become wearied of a Whig cabinet? It is not so much that they dislike Tory policy, or Tory views; but they get sick of seeing the same men always in power,—always enjoying the loaves and fishes; never admitting any others to participate with them: and carrying into effect the same measures themselves that they opposed when brought forward by others. Look at the Emancipation Bill; look even at Sir Robert's criminal law arrangements; and look at the changes in the administration of justice. As long as the Tories stuck to their principles and system, neither budging to the right or the left, the people of this country said, 'These men are honest men. Their system may be good, or it may be bad; but at least they believe it to be good, and they stick to it: they are honest men for doing so, and we will support them.' But when the Tories brought forward the Emancipation Bill, after having opposed it for the last fifty years, then the people said, 'These men are placemen; they have no attachment any longer to fixed

principles, but will violate those of their party, and of their own consciences to maintain themselves in office; and now seek to obtain popularity from the passing of a measure, the rejection of which from year to year was one of the principal grounds of their popularity.' "

" So, then, you would have had the Duke risk a rebellion in Ireland for the purpose of proving his consistency. You would have had Sir Robert lose all the support of the Dissenters, Methodists, and English Catholics, as well as Jews, and the vast mass of persons in England who care not two straws whether a man be a Protestant or a Catholic, so long as he pays his rent, and gives good parties; and to lose the support of all these persons to his general government, in order to prove his consistency. The true art of governing is to accommodate one's principles to the state of public opinion for the time being; to derive good from evil, and overrule the evil as much as possible; and, above all things, to remain in office, first, to secure the triumph of your

own principles; or, second, if you cannot do that, to prevent the triumph, or diminish, or mitigate the triumph of those of your adversaries. This is the policy of the Tories at this moment. They make some concessions, to prevent the necessity for making others. If more be demanded, they will stand their ground, fight inch by inch, and possibly——be defeated. If defeated, your party will take office; but in a few years they will be required to follow up their principles. This they will not be able to do, for it would lead to anarchy; and, unable to govern their own party, and to make head against ours, the Tories will return to power."

The ladies, who had withdrawn to cloak and fur themselves for the carriages in order to proceed to the theatre, now returned to the dining-room, and in a few minutes they were all laughing outright at the very pleasant farce of "Jeremy Diddler."

"What a rogue in grain he is!" said Lord Swainton to Miss Charlotte, to whom on all occasions he paid the most marked and assidu-

ous attentions. "These men are not uncommon in Bath. You must not be surprised to hear some of those with whom you may even associate so styled by their friends! But as I am about leaving you for a few days to proceed to London, and make the necessary arrangements for your brother as to Warnstable, I would advise you to tell him to be very cautious with respect to the new society he may form. I can safely confide you to Lady Muchberry and to Lord Nonpareil, who, though a bit of a Whig, is only a *bit* of a one, and is perfectly harmless in his political principles and associations. It would be a good rule, I think, as you may have many cards left, just to show them to Lady Muchberry before exchanging visits, especially as your brother is about to become a man of political importance, and it would not do to have his fair fame compromised by any connexion with families not known in Conservative or Whig circles. The member for Warnstable must be as pure and unsullied as your mind, Miss Charlotte, or he will not enter St. Stephen's

as the son of Sir Edward Clapperton should do."

There was an affected gravity in these words which of course sank deep into the heart of Miss Clapperton, and she assured his lordship that she would have a little private confab with her brother on this most important topic.

"Beggars description!" said Lord Swainton to himself. "If I manage well, I shall keep up my reputation with this family, secure Sir Edward his seat, economize 2,000*l.* by my financial arrangements, get over all my Bath difficulties; marry, perhaps, Miss Charlotte, commence life again, once more inherit Swainton Hall, provide for my children, and live, as I should live, in splendour and dignity. Beggars description!"

The rest of the evening was devoted to mirth. The pieces were all amusing; the assembly-room was open to two quiet card-parties; tea, and other miscellaneous enjoyments, kept up the life of the party; and the Miss Clappertons and Lucy declared at the

close, " that it was the pleasantest day they had ever spent in their lives."

" This is high life, my dear," said Charlotte to Lucy: "what do you think of it?"

" That it is exquisite!" replied Lucy: and they all said " Good night!"

CHAPTER II.

Let us grant it not amiss to sit,
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,
To reel the streets at noon.

SHAKSPEARE.

'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures,
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dext'rous; some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,
Some by a place, as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash—but all have prices
From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.

BYRON.

Dire was the clang of plates, of knife and fork,
That merc'less fell like tomahawks to work.

PETER PINDAR.

"I MUST leave you, Sir Edward, for a few days," said Lord Swainton the next morning; "and as travelling post alone is neither agreeable nor necessary, you will allow me to return you your post-chariot, with many thanks. I shall

go to London by the York coach, make the arrangements which are necessary for carrying down, if necessary, the few outvoters who live in the metropolis, intrust the management of that affair to Montague, who has for some days past given his attention to it, and arrange for a party to Warnstable to arrive on the day previous to the writ being moved for. By the by, who would you like to accompany you thither? I thought of having yourself and myself, Scrope, Montague, and Captain Smallman, who has wholly renounced all pretensions to the seat in your favour; who else shall we name?"

"I think my old friend Captain Macfarlane and young Catherwood, who having taken the dull unpleasant journey with the gold to Sir Oscar's to oblige me, might now perhaps be delighted to proceed on an election excursion and see all the fun of a contest."

"That will make seven," replied Lord Swainton; "four in the carriage, and three in the new post-chariot. Good! very good! Then so let it be considered as arranged. You, Sir

Edward, will invite Captain Macfarlane and young Mr. Catherwood, and I will answer for the rest."

"But what do you propose doing relative to my address to the worthy electors, my lord?" asked Sir Edward. "You have not forgotten, I am sure, that Sergeant Sadface is to be consulted whether the promise it contains to beautify the theatre would amount to bribery."

"I will take care of that," said his lordship; "but it would be quite inexpedient to have the address printed before arriving at Warnstable, since on all these occasions the printers of the town must be employed."

"Doubtless there are several," replied Sir Edward.

"Then," said Lord Swainton, "we must employ them all. We must make up our minds that you shall be a member, and that nothing shall prevent it."

"You are very good, my lord, and I have again to congratulate myself on the turn which the affair of Lord Bourtonbury's son

took yesterday. If Lord Nonpareil had fallen into other hands, in the prosecution of his inquiries, it is more than probable he would have advised his lordship to allow Lord Robert to become a candidate; but now, I think, we need be under no apprehensions on that head, and that a new candidate is next to impossible."

"Oh, nothing is impossible in election matters," said his lordship; "a candidate may offer on the day of nomination, and by dint of enormous bribery run us hard; but *finis coronat opus*—we shall see you at the head of the poll. Clapperton for ever! Huzza! huzza! Beggars description!"

The rest of the conversation turned on some minor arrangements. A flag was to be prepared of white and green, which were agreed on as the colours of the Clappertons, and on this flag was to be worked "Clapperton, and Prosperity to the Borough of Warnstable."

"This inscription," said his lordship, "will please all, and offend none. If we placed on

the flag "Clapperton, and Church and State," we should offend the Dissenters. If we inscribed "Clapperton, and the Independence of Warnstable," we should shock the high Tory and Church party. If we wrote, "Clapperton and Liberty," we should be set down as Radicals. But "Clapperton, and Prosperity to the Borough of Warnstable," will delight all! The worthy natives will imagine that they are all to be made rich, all to be made prosperous in their businesses, all to have their manufactures improved; and you, Sir Edward, will be regarded as another Crœsus."

"I hope not, my lord," replied Sir Edward, with evident sincerity.

"Oh, never fear, never fear, Sir Edward," said Lord Swainton, in a most encouraging tone. "If you like, I will undertake the whole affair myself — arranging the theatre included, (*i. e.* provided it can be done legally,) and I will indemnify you from any call whatever, for 7,000*l.* Come, I will be contractor, have the theatre splendidly adorned, and pay all your election expenses, whether there be a

contest or not, for the sum I have mentioned. What say you?"

"It 's a bargain," said Sir Edward, with unaffected joy. "I resemble my poor dear father in that point of my character: I like to know the total amount, and be sure that at all events no further claim can be made. So say 7,000*l.* and your lordship take all the risk."

"This is a sort of wager," replied Lord Swainton; "I may lose one or two thousand pounds: I may gain the like sum. I am fond of excitement. I love a little speculation! Well, I will take all upon myself for 7,000*l.* including 500*l.* for the theatre."

"But in case your lordship should learn from Sergeant Sadface that the beautifying the theatre will be an act of bribery, what shall we say then?"

"Why then, of course we shall deduct the 500*l.* and I will undertake to guarantee you against any claims in respect of the election for 6,500*l.* So give me your hand (and they both shook hands).

"That 's a bargain," said his lordship.

"Done," replied Sir Edward.

"Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!" ejaculated Lord Swainton.

That was a happy moment for his lordship. He had had some few twinges of conscience before, but now he had none any longer. "It is a contract I have made, and Clapperton now knows that I may make a thousand or two out of him. This is the best hit of all."

"I may as well give your lordship a draft on my bankers for 1,000*l.* at once," said Sir Edward; "and to prevent it from being traced to you, in the event of a parliamentary committee on any charge of bribery, I will make the cheque payable to myself and hand it over to you. You can receive the amount in gold, and no tracing of money can thus take place."

"Just as you please, Sir Edward," replied Lord Swainton, in a tone and manner indicating great indifference. "In that case, should Sergeant Sadface decide against embellishing the theatre, I will place in your hands five hundred sovereigns, and thus close

the transaction. I confess, however, I think he will be of opinion, that there will be nothing like bribery in such a general and not individual measure."

Sir Edward then drew the cheque on Drummonds, and placed it in Lord Swainton's hands, who treated it with a snug quiet corner in his waistcoat pocket.

Lord Swainton gave instructions to his Italian courier to prepare his travelling apparatus, whilst he proceeded to take leave of the ladies.

"Ladies, charming, bright, and fair, I must say adieu! Adieu Miss Charlotte, best of the best! adieu Miss Sophia, wittiest of the wittiest! adieu Miss Lucy, brightest of the brightest! Take care of your hearts! take care of your healths! take care of your spirits! let them not flag for a moment! For Bath is the region, yes, Bath is the region to keep soul and body alive! Beggars description! Ha! ha! ha!" and he left the room.

"A pleasant journey, my dear lord," said

Sir Edward as the York coach drew from the door of the hotel, "and a speedy return."

"Love to the ladies! Don't forget that," said his lordship; "and above all, to Miss Charlotte," he added, in a sort of whisper, "Ha! ha! ha!" He would have added, "beggars description;" but there was no time, and the coach was soon out of sight.

His lordship was peculiarly unfortunate: there was not one inside passenger. He was "*solus*;" he had the conversation wholly to himself; his only auditors were the cushions and the window-glasses; and he drew largely on their attention. He began as follows:—

"Messrs. Drummond and Co.
Charing Cross,
London."
"Pay to self or bearer, one thousand pounds."
"E. Clapperton."

"Beggars description! Another thousand! but this is the last one! Yes, the last! 7,000*l.* in all! How must it be expended?"

	£	
Sir Oscar	1,400	—for surely he will not require me to pay back the 100*l.* I borrowed.
Mr. Walter . . .	300	—for I shall give him no more. He must abate 200*l.* off my note.
Sam Pocock, for election expenses . .	1,200	
My own travelling expenses . . .	200	
Sir Felix Montague and the outvoters	300	
My play debts . . .	300	
Extra expenses at election	200	
	£3,900	

"Then come the expenses of embellishing the theatre, 500*l.*; and 100*l.* for wages, carriage-hire, favours, cockades, &c.; a total of 4,500*l.* Thus, at any rate, I must clear 2,500*l.* for myself. I *must* do this. I *will* do this. Beggars description! yes — beggars description! But suppose there should be really a contest! Suppose some scamp of a Whig should come at the last moment, and offer himself as a candidate; what then? Then I must make up my mind to spend 1,000*l.*

more; for cost what it may, in he must come. Still I shall have nett 1,500*l.* I must secure this sum at once. I will call on Coutts's—pay in to my own account 2,500*l.*; there let it remain; draw nothing out. The balance in my favour, in their hands, has been about one pound four shillings for the last four months; and they wish I would close the account altogether. But now I will astonish their weak minds by paying in 2,500*l.*! By so doing I shall not risk the whole of this enormous sum of 7,000*l.* and shall protect myself against myself, and have secured, at least, a handsome balance to fall back upon. I have now in my possession somewhere about 5,000*l.* I have paid Sir Oscar; my own travelling expenses; and my play debts at Bath. Good! I must now give Sir Felix his 300*l.* Excellent! What delight! what satisfaction for him to have 300*l.*; out of which, he will have to pay 100*l.* for tavern expenses and outvoters, and the rest slip quietly in his pocket. This Italian courier of mine I must keep on until the end of the affair. He has seen nothing of debts, seizures,

duns, or botherations, since he has been with me; and as he speaks English indifferently, I cannot do better than retain him. I have allowed 400*l.* and 100*l.* extra — for all our travelling expenses — and that is a large sum for inns and post-horses. Twelve hundred pounds at Warnstable, with such a manager as Sam Pocock, will be quite sufficient there, except, indeed, we should be unlucky enough to start a competitor, and then I must draw upon Coutts's some portion of the 2,500*l.* I shall now pay in. But as no Whig would have a chance there, why should I anticipate such ill-fortune? No! — instead of this, I will say no competition — 2,500*l.* untouched — credit high at my bankers' — give orders for the repairs of Swainton Park — hire splendid furniture — get all in order — invite Sir Edward Clapperton, M.P. for Warnstable, to Swainton — give splendid fêtes for a week — spend altogether 1,000*l.* — make an offer to Miss Charlotte — obtain her consent — require a handsome settlement — lead her to the hymeneal altar — travel a year or two on the Continent

— charge my lawyers to arrange my affairs with my creditors during my absence, who, when they see me fairly off, will be delighted to take five shillings in the pound, and think themselves well paid, as they would be: so that 5,000*l.* would settle that affair; borrow this sum on my marriage settlement with Charlotte, and a policy of insurance; return to England, reside at Swainton, attend with regularity the House of Lords during the session, exhibit my vast knowledge of foreign affairs and policy, get called on to fill some ministerial post of importance, and end my days happily and respected. Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description! All, however, feasible — everything possible with gold and silver in the pocket — nothing feasible without! Splendid prospects! bright futurity! All's right."

With this, and similar discussions and conversations, carried on by himself, in a rather loud tone of voice, Lord Swainton amused himself during the greater part of his journey to London; till at length wearied with his own tongue, and worn out with many hours

of excitement, he fell asleep. His dreams were all golden. He dreamt that Sam Pocock had informed him that 1,000*l.* would be sufficient for election expenses at Warnstable; that Mr. Walter had received 300*l.* with gratitude, and returned him his draft of 500*l.*; that Sir Edward was returned without a contest; and that Miss Charlotte had a fortune of 40,000*l.*, which was in personal property, and which, by the settlement, he had the right of fingering; and, finally, he dreamt that a meeting of his creditors had been held at Gray's Inn Coffee-house, and that his proposal of five shillings in the pound had been accepted without a dissentient voice. He woke, and found himself mistaken; but still he had 5,000*l.* in his possession; and his dreams, therefore, he accepted as good auguries of future success.

"The whole of this, dreams and all, beggar description!" said his lordship, as the coach stopped at the White Horse Cellar, from whence himself and his courier proceeded without delay to Long's Hotel.

"My dear Montague, how are you?" ask-

ed Lord Swainton, as he entered the sitting-room of Sir Felix; "as for myself I am literally dead with fatigue, dead with excitement, dead with anxiety, dead with hard work, dead with travelling, dead with cold, dead with hunger, and dead with sleep; and yet I must breakfast with you at once, for hunger and thirst like mine will admit of no delay. Beggars description!"

"I hope all is going on satisfactorily, my lord," said Sir Felix. "You understand what I mean—the rhino. These Warnstable out-voters, though few in number, are as savage a set of unlicked cubs as you could hope to meet with in Kamschatka. They will not talk to you—not so much as talk—till you have soaked them in port and sherry; and then they praise Mr. Bennett, who gave them 20*l.* per head; and then Mr. Foster, who gave them 18*l.*; and lastly, Mr. Williams, who, though he reduced them to 15*l.*, was yet so good to their families. I gave a snug dinner last Saturday to four of the best of them, and had your old friend Fowkes for my deputy

chairman. We made the rascals as drunk as topers, and they called the next day to say they had never passed so happy an evening in their lives. They have some influence at Warnstable. I have not named the candidate yet, nor said anything of an early election; but simply that in case of a general election, I entreated them to remember that I had a candidate to bring forward who would act as liberally as any man who had yet solicited the honour of their suffrages. They have no idea of Sir Oscar resigning at present, though they do not expect he will stand at the next general election. As to politics, I know not what they may be at Warnstable, but the outvoters have no politics at all. It is a matter of perfect indifference to them whether the candidate be Whig or Tory, so that he takes down the outvoters, has a large purse, and is liberal. Of course they are opposed to anything like Reform, and a radical member who should propose to alter their elective franchise and borough privileges, they would roast alive; but on all other matters they are wholly in-

different. In case of an opposition and a near run, it would be necessary to take them down; but whether they go or not, their bribe must be given them, minus their travelling expenses. They had heard that two parties had been to Warnstable; one, the son of Lord Bourtonbury, and the other, a Mr. Gurney (yourself), making inquiries; but your real name had not transpired, and Sam Pocock, your old family servant, has kept the secret very well. This, then, is the state of affairs. You have just arrived at the right moment. Cash begins to be scarce, and Dempster politely asked me if it were I who had ordered my bill last night, to which I as politely replied in the negative; but the sight of your lordship will set that all to rights, as they have a high opinion of your resources from some chattering which took place between Dempster and Clapperton's servant;—and a little money will now go a good way."

"I can spare you a 50*l.* note, my dear fellow," replied Lord Swainton; "but that must take us on till the hour of conflict, and then

funds will not be wanting. In one word, you will have 200*l.* for yourself."

"Oh, that will do very well," replied Sir Felix. "Electors, innkeepers, and tailors will always take ten shillings in the pound, and give you credit for the remainder, provided you continue to augment the account."

"Precisely so," replied his lordship; "but as I should like to see all of the outvoters together, suppose you convoke them to meet to-morrow night at the Freemasons' tavern, or Crown and Anchor, and I will give them an address on the occasion. Punch and pipes, are all that will be required; and I will write to Sir Edward from the very room at the scene of punching, piping, and spouting, and encourage himself and his sisters in their present state of anxiety,—not to say apprehension. Let all the outvoters be present, if possible, and I 'll try and satisfy all parties."

"If you selected some city or east end of the town house, it would be much better," replied Sir Felix, "for most of them vegetate in those quarters; and although it is highly

necessary that I should reside where I do, and give to three or four of them now and then, and in their turns, a late dinner or early supper,—we had better go to them in one of their own beer and brandy houses, when we have nothing but punch and pipes to offer them. We must keep them up to the point, and quite alive, until the day of moving for a new writ, and then their votes will be ours.

"I once remember alighting at the Bull in Bishopsgate Street," said his lordship; "will that do, do you think?"

Sir Felix neither knew Bishopsgate Street, nor the Bull; but a map of London soon enabled him to pronounce an opinion; and the latitude and longitude of the Bull, with reference to the residences of most of the non-resident electors, were pronounced to be admirable.

The next night a large and commodious room at the Bull was duly warmed, lighted, and filled: not filled with non-resident voters, but with their wives, children, and friends, who accompanied them. The outvoters them-

selves were but fourteen in number; but every one of them was present, and the whole party was sixty.

Although eight o'clock was the hour of meeting, the room was crammed by seven, and the electors and their assistants were vociferous for pipes, porter, spittoons, and "half-and-half" for the ladies.

James Hoarseroar took the lead on behalf of his co-electors and friends; and when Sir Felix and Lord Swainton arrived at half-past seven, the room was full of smoke, and the ladies and gentlemen were busily engaged in discussing the probabilities of a general election.

"We shall have a new parliament soon," exclaimed James Hoarseroar, "wery soon indeed; therefore look sharp, gentlemen, and keep both eyes open."

"Very good counsel—excellent advice," said his lordship, as he entered the room. "But what do I see before me?—pewter pots! Shocking! What! ask the electors of Warnstable, and their charming wives and pretty daughters to drink porter or purl! My friend

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and candidate would not approve of this. Punch, punch for ever, in all matters of politics and election! What say you, gentlemen? —and what say you, ladies?"

"Certainly, sir; you are perfectly in the right," bawled James Hoarseroar; "but we only whetted our whistles, as the saying is, till public business should begin, with a few pots of brown stout, just preparatory, as it were, to what was to follow. Now for punch and pipes as soon as you like, sir; and the more the merrier."

If bowls had been as large as washing-tubs, they would soon have been emptied by sixty thirsty souls; and the landlord of the Bull took the liberty to suggest to the chairman, Sir Felix, that, to prevent mistake, no punch should be supplied without orders in writing from him.

Little cards were then supplied him, with pens and ink; and his first order was for ten bowls, all to be brought in at the same moment. The sight of ten bowls of punch, well placed at equal distances down the two long

tables, gladdened the hearts of the Warnstable outvoters, families, and friends; but no sooner had they drank a glass round, "merely as a taster," than his lordship observed that there was a general whispering, tittering, and giggling, especially among the female sex.

"Good drinking requires good eating," exclaimed the veteran Hoarseroar, and then the ladies and daughters of the Warnstable outvoters laughed aloud. The secret of the whispering and tittering was explained: the electors had been accustomed to eat, as well as to drink; and though hot rum punch on a cold winter's night was too good a thing to be refused, yet bread, cheese, butter, cold meat, and even rump-steaks and potatoes, would be no disagreeable accompaniments.

"Venison and turtle, if you will," said his lordship, "or whatever else the house affords." A fine round of beef, two large hams, half a Cheshire cheese, and bread *sans discrétion* were placed on the tables, without table-cloths, in less than half an hour; and in the mean time Mr. Gurney (for his lordship kept up his

incog.) asked permission of the chairman to propose a toast.

"I am delighted to meet you," said his lordship: "I have never in my life beheld on any one occasion so many happy and good faces. I have travelled a good deal, and seen many sights, but this joyous scene now before me beggars description! If reform, ladies and gentlemen, would deprive us of such meetings as these, who would not cry with me 'DOWN WITH REFORM!'"

"Yes — Down with Reform!" shouted Hoarseroar; and this was the signal for young and old, masculine and feminine, to join in one universal cry of "Down with Reform!"

This was Lord Swainton's first toast, and it was drunk with enthusiasm.

"That's the right stuff," said William Martin, as he emptied the bowl placed before him and his five surrounding friends; "this is the stuff that sticks to the ribs — the finest tipple in the universe, say what they will to the contrary. Nothing like punch!"

"Keep your elbows to yourself with your

horatory," said his able and athletic wife, snatching the glass from her husband's hand at the same moment, and pouring its contents down her own throat; "for if you don't, you shall have punch indeed, but it shall be a punch in your eye."

Some laughed, others shouted, but the genteeler portion of the feminines looked shocked at the vulgarity of Mrs. Martin.

"That will be all my eye and Betty Martin," exclaimed Hoarseroar; and this time every one laughed, for Hoarseroar was the governor of them all; they all looked up to him as the chosen one through whose hands the bank notes found their way into the electors' pockets, and it was a sort of understood thing amongst them that all should laugh at his jokes in return for his guineas.

"Allow me, Sir Felix," said Lord Swainton, raising his voice to the highest pitch in order that he might be heard, as sixty other voices were all talking, shouting, or hallooing at the same moment, "to propose another toast."

"That's right, my hearty old gentleman!"

cried Hoarseroar; "as many toasts as you like, and the more the merrier."

"I will propose, then, 'Prosperity to the Invoters and Outvoters of the Borough of Warnstable:' and allow me to say, in proposing this toast, that I have lately visited your beautiful and wonderful town. Nothing could possibly be more handsome. I was struck with its port; but it wants improving."

"So it does," shouted Hoarseroar.

"I was pleased with the theatre; but it wanted beautifying."

"That 's true again," responded Hoarseroar.

"I was captivated with the spirit of industry which pervaded all classes, and particularly the small manufacturing classes; but they require to be employed, they need protection; they should be watched over by one who feels that they are his brethren, and that it is his duty to see them employed and happy."

"Never said a truer word in your life!" ejaculated Hoarseroar.

"All these things delighted me," continued his lordship: "but to render Warnstable what

it should be, you require a man of spirit, a man of nerve, a man of high character and honour, a man of solid reputation, a man of wit and talent, but above all a MAN OF GUINEAS to represent you."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Martin.

"Yes, a man of guineas!" shouted Hoarse-roar; and men, women, and children caught the joyful sound, and one and all responded, "Bravo! a man of guineas!"

Lord Swainton perceived in a moment that he had touched the right chord, that the Radical outvoters of the old borough in question were all lovers of bribery; that a poor candidate was the man they most despised, and a wealthy one the object of their adoration. So his lordship continued:

"Yes, my fair friends, you are right in your cries of a man of guineas, and you shall have one?"

These words, pronounced with great energy, led to a scene of the most vehement joy, accompanied by screams, stamping of feet, clapping of hands, waving of handkerchiefs, and other

indications of matchless satisfaction. This lasted several minutes; and his lordship went on to say,—

"And this man of guineas is a friend of mine,—a dear friend,—a valued friend,—a close and bosom friend,—a truly valuable friend; and for the sake of giving him some name (though not his real one), I will call him Sir Twenty Shilling Bank Note!"

"Capital! capital!" shouted Hoarseroar.

"Then he's twenty shillings to the pound," screamed Martin.

"That's the man for our money," responded Hoarseroar.

"I promise him my vote," said Mrs. Martin.

"Thank you, madam! Thank you, for Sir Twenty Shilling Bank Note; and before long he will, I hope, thank you in person."

"Oh, never mind his person," replied Mrs. Martin; "I've seen persons enough in my time,—let us see his guineas. Here's a bit of a person I've been tied to for twenty years,—ill luck to me;" (pointing to poor little Mr. Martin, the outvoter, her husband;) "so

let 's hear nothing about persons, but as much as you will about guineas. He may be as ugly as sin, and as stupid as my husband, if his pockets are full, and he knows how to empty them."

"If he does not know," said Martin, rather snappishly, "you 'll teach him, won't you, mistress?"

"Don't call me your mistress," retorted Mrs. Martin; "let the gentleman speak; hold your tongue, and let us hear all we can about the guineas."

"Well, then, Sir Twenty Shilling Bank Note, my friend, and your candidate, is a fine, young, handsome, rich, generous fellow, who throws about bank notes and sovereigns as you would sprats or peas in a time of plenty. They are nothing to him, as sprats or peas are nothing to you. He wishes prosperity to your borough."

"Never mind the borough," exclaimed Hoarseroar; say "yourselves."

"Well, then, my friend, I will say, he wishes your prosperity, and the prosperity of

your wives and daughters; he wishes for cheap bread, and plenty of money to buy it with."

"That 's it—that 's it," interrupted Hoarse-roar; "never mind cheap bread,—that 's all gammon. But plenty of money,—there 's no gammon in that. One of our former representatives, a very good sort of fellow in his way, after having been in Parliament seven years at two elections, came the third time and asked for our votes. 'This time,' says he, 'I 've no money, but I 'll serve you faithfully. I am no longer rich, but I 'm an honest man.' 'Out with your honesty,' says I, 'master, that won't do here,—pipes and punch, beef and porter cost money,—and honesty won't pay the reckoning.' So he gave up all hopes of gammoning us with his honesty. Stick to the guineas, sir, and let your candidate know, whoever he may be, that the electors of Warnstable care not two straws about politics, honesty, or fine speaking, but about long purses, guineas, and their liberal distribution."

"We perfectly understand each other," re-

plied Lord Swainton; "and therefore you will join me in drinking, 'Prosperity to the Invoters and Outvoters of the Borough of Warnstable.'"

"Now, gentlemen, charge your glasses," said Sir Felix,— and this part of the duty of a borough outvoter was performed with enthusiasm.

"Three times three," said Sir Felix.

"With all our hearts," replied Hoarseroar, who filled and emptied his glass so often, that a bystander would have thought he had meant that the toast was to be drunk with three times three glasses of punch.

The toast was followed by a glee,

"The land we live in,"

and the ladies and daughters joined in the chorus.

When the applause had subsided, new bowls of punch had made their appearance, and silence was procured, Lord Swainton once more rose, and addressed the meeting as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen, — friends, — electors,— and all you who are present, and are

attached to your borough, to your rights and interests, to the place which gave you birth, and who desire to see a wealthy and a generous man represent you in Parliament,—listen to my toast. I propose to you, 'the health of my wealthy and generous friend Sir Twenty Shilling Bank Note, and may he be returned at the next election for the borough of Warnstable to represent it in Parliament.'"

"I say ditto to the last speaker," shouted Hoarseroar.

"And I say ditto, too," chirped little Martin.

"Just you say nothing at all, if you please," exclaimed his most overbearing and quarrelsome wife. "Leave these matters to your betters; drink your punch and hold your tongue."

Martin said not a word in reply, but followed most implicitly her directions with respect to the punch.

"Hip! hip! hip!" cried the chairman; and the toast was drunk with every possible mark of excitement and enthusiasm.

As soon as the toast was drunk, Lord Swain-

ton called for a sheet of letter paper, and wrote, under the feelings of the moment, the following epistle.

"The Bull, Bishopsgate, Thursday night.

"My dear Sir Edward,

"Here I am at the Bull,—and the Bull at Bishopsgate too,—surrounded by the most virtuous, most loyal, most devoted outvoters of Warnstable. They have just drunk to your health in a manner that can admit of no doubt as to your success with them. Here, then, your election is certain. I never witnessed so much enthusiasm. I dwelt on your virtues, family, fame, and wealth, but without mentioning your name. This must not be done till a few days, two or three, prior to it being known at Warnstable. They are drinking hogsheads of beer and oceans of punch to your health, though I suspect not to their own. You are known to them as 'Sir Twenty Shilling Bank Note,' and I as William Gurney, Esq. They have just struck up

'Punch cures the gout, the cholic, and the phthisic,
And it is, of all things, the very best of physic.'

"The noise of their sweet voices is like ten thousand cataracts all roaring at once, or like one thousand Atlantics in a foam. My head turns round quicker than a spinning jenny, and my pen refuses to write. So with best love to the ladies from myself, and compliments to the Miss Clappertons from Sir Felix Montague, who is our chairman, I am, as ever,

"My dear Sir Edward,

"Yours faithfully,

"SWAINTON."

"Beggars description!" said his lordship, as he read the letter in the ear of Montague. "'The noise of their sweet voices is like ten thousand cataracts, all roaring at once, or like one thousand Atlantics in a foam!' Ha! ha! ha! — Very good — very good! Beggars description!"

"Very good, indeed," replied Sir Felix; "but just have the goodness to interline the word 'best' before 'compliments,' and 'to yourself,' before the Miss Clappertons; for I've a great notion of making up to these

people myself; and as Miss Sophia has so good an opinion of me, I see no reason upon earth for not having a similar one of her. Charlotte for your lordship, Sophia for myself, and Warnstable for Sir Edward; and I think they would all be well matched."

"Good—good!" said his lordship; and he made the desired corrections in the letter without delay.

"Friends and brother electors," said Hoarseroar, "I offer you my toast; and as good wine needs no bush, so a good toast needs no long speech. I rise to propose 'Long life and prosperity to Sir Felix Montague, our chairman, and to William Gurney, Esq., the gentleman who has done so much towards keeping us all alive this evening.'"

This was an admirable hit of Mr. Hoarseroar's to get more punch.

"Gentlemen, charge your glasses," continued Hoarseroar.

"We have nothing to charge them with," replied Mrs. Martin, who was as much attached to the bowl as she was to the bottle.

"No punch to drink the best toast of the evening," said Hoarseroar, with affected surprise. "Mr. Chairman, we must trouble you for some more tickets."

"With delight I give them to you," replied Sir Felix; and six more bowls were ordered.

The time which had to pass before six bowls could make their appearance was employed by Lord Swainton in procuring the exact addresses of each outvoter, for Hoarseroar had hitherto kept these to himself. His lordship likewise registered how many wives and children belonged to these independent freemen, and "all with a view that his friend Sir Twenty Shilling Bank Note might be made acquainted with the real position, wants, and wishes of all his electors and their families."

"That's something like a canvasser," said Hoarseroar: "a few like Mr. Gurney, and Warnstable would boast of wealthy as well fine, noble-spirited freemen."

The punch now made its appearance: Sir Felix Montague's and Lord Swainton's healths were drunk; and this distinguished mark of

the Warnstable outvoters', confidence and respect was replied to, as follows: —

Sir Felix Montague. — "Ladies and Gentlemen: Placed as I am, in the proud and truly distinguished post of your president this evening, I confess I feel overpowered by my feelings of gratitude for your condescension and goodness. If I have in any manner contributed to the mirth, good-humour, and joviality of this evening, I am delighted. If on some future occasion you shall again deem me worthy of the same office, I shall be prouder still. In the meantime, as the evening is somewhat advanced, you will now allow me to retire." (Cries of "Bravo, Sir Felix," from every quarter.)

Hoarseroar exclaimed, "A song, a song! — 'One bumper at parting:'" but he was reminded that William Gurney, Esq. (Lord Swainton) had not yet made his speech in return for the honour conferred likewise on him. His lordship spoke as follows:—

"Beggars description, my friends,— really it does, — it beggars description! Do you

know what o'clock it is?—One o'clock in a cold January morning. What will my wife say?—what will my children think?"—(Shouts of laughter.) "In the city, too, where the curfew used to toll at eight o'clock to put out all lights and fires, to be drinking toasts and singing songs with the most charming women on the earth, at one in the morning! I shall lose my reputation, and I am sadly afraid you will lose yours. The next time I see you, ladies, I hope to present to your favourable notice and attention Sir Twenty Shilling Bank Note himself, who is so young, handsome, and wealthy, that you must take care of all your hearts, or he will run away with them. He 's the handsomest, cleverest, wittiest, and one of the wealthiest men in the world; so, husbands, mind your wives; and girls take care of your hearts. Beggars description!"

His lordship sat down amidst the most rapturous applause, during which many glasses were broken, and at the end of which "One bumper at parting," was sung and chorussed

by all of the party who were not actually incapacitated from joining in this most tumultuous display of joy and satisfaction.

Lord Swainton and Sir Felix then withdrew, and reached Long's Hotel a little before two in the morning.

"We have nailed them, I think," said his lordship, as they rode home. "I never saw fellows better satisfied, or more merry. Beggars description!"

"It is important in this way," said Sir Felix: "all these people have relatives and friends at Warnstable. They will write to them; tell them to reserve their votes; boast of the wealth and generous intentions of our candidate; excite an interest in his behalf there; and then hereafter, when they compare notes, and find that the candidate now proposed is the same as the one introduced by your lordship at Warnstable, there will be such an enthusiasm in his favour that nothing can resist. His election will then be certain. If his election be secured, it is hard indeed if his sisters shall not be ours. They

must have decent fortunes. They are a good sort of girls — can be trained to anything — look very well — and when Clapperton is in Parliament, one need not be ashamed of them. Is this our plan, my lord?"

"Certainly, certainly," replied Lord Swainton: and they arrived safely at Long's.

CHAPTER III.

Come, love and health to all ;
Then I 'll sit down : give me some wine :
I drink to the general joy of the whole table.

SHAKSPEARE.

Care to our coffin adds a nail, no doubt ;
And every grin so merry, draws one out.

PETER PINDAR.

Oh, sages ! think on joy like this,
And where 's your boast of apathy.

MOORE.

——— No simple word,
That shall be utter'd at our mirthful board,
Shall make us sad next morning.

BEN JONSON.

THE day of Lord Swainton's departure from Milsom Street was one of sadness to the Clappertons. To them, he was so original, so clever, so wild, so extravagant, and so amusing, that his loss was severely felt. They all wished that he did not "bounce so often;" all confessed

that he exaggerated so much that really they were obliged to believe in only a tithe of his statements; but all agreed "that he was without exception the best companion they had ever met with," and that his kindness to Sir Edward entitled him to their gratitude and respect. Lucy indeed knew little of that kindness, or what it meant, as scarcely anything had been hitherto said before her with reference to Warnstable; but she heard Charlotte and Sophia allude very often to his "disinterested exertions," and therefore felt with them that he ought to be esteemed.

Lady Muchberry called the next day on the Clappertons, accompanied by Lord Nonpareil. She found them enthusiastic in the praises of their lost friend, and she joined them in all their eulogies, and lauded him to the skies. Lord Nonpareil was mores paring in his encomiums, though he took care not to forfeit the good opinion of his new acquaintances by any unfavourable observation. Lady Muchberry had "a very quiet card and conversation party the next evening at her house, and promised

the ladies a quadrille or two if they would consent to meet at nine, and not to be offended if all the world went away about midnight." The Miss Clappertons, Lucy, and Sir Edward were all "most happy," and Lady Muchberry was "enchanted."

"I must study politics," said Sir Edward to his sisters at the next morning's breakfast-table, "I take it my return for Warnstable is now next to certain, and I must prepare myself for action. I have no notion of going into Parliament to sit and say nothing. I am told indeed that both Tories and Whigs cry every man down who has not been to college, who has anything of the city or the shop about him, and who does not belong to their parties in social, as well as in public life. And yet Waithman the linen-draper used to obtain a hearing; and Alderman Tin is treated with respect. To be sure they were both city members, and were considered as entitled to be heard on that ground. But mercantile men, or men of city origin, are coughed down and laughed down—even men of great ability and

sound judgment. If a Radical belongs to a decent family, or is known as representing a large or even small constituency, provided he be well considered on the turf, at the tables, or in the club-houses, he is listened to, they tell me, with as much attention as Sir Robert or Lord S——. Look, for example, at Tom Bunkin, the member for Lowbury, where dissent and radicalism prevail; or look again at Sir William Wadsworth, the member for a large manufacturing district. Though he says "the people need only to be energetic and determined, — their voices will be heard, and their wishes must be complied with," still they hear him with attention and respect; whilst many a Radical, with thrice his fortune, from the manufacturing districts, would not dare to speak for fear of a rush to the doors, and empty benches. So I am told at least; and this is an additional reason for my studying politics, that when I have to speak on some question of local or general importance, I may command attention by my superior knowledge."

"As for that, dear Edward," replied Miss Charlotte, "whatever you apply your mind to, you are sure to succeed in; though it strikes me that you can only study politics in the newspapers, reading all the dull dry speeches, and all the disagreeable articles called the leading articles, which I would not be bound to study to be queen of the world. What else do you mean by studying politics?"

"Why, my dear Charlotte, I really hardly know; but the science of political economy, for example, I am wholly ignorant of, and whenever I have looked into it, it has appeared so dry and uninteresting that I have at once abandoned it in despair. For example, our poor, dear father once came to a determination to study this science, because he was told that Alderman B—— commanded attention at the court of aldermen by his great insight into political economy. He bought 'Smith's Wealth of Nations;' and for a year and a half, you know, he brought

out the first volume every day after dinner to look over at his dessert."

"Oh, I remember perfectly well, dear Edward, how he was sure to doze by the time he got to the second or third page. Mamma used to call it 'Smith's laudanum bottle;' for as sure as papa got that book, so sure was he of sleeping within a quarter of an hour afterwards. I recollect when he got to the end of the first volume, he exclaimed,—'Come, that job's jobbed!'—but I never saw the second volume in his hands. Still, if you think you ought to study it, we could easily get it down from the hall, for it stands on the same shelf and in the same corner that it did during his life-time."

Sir Edward "thought this unnecessary, inasmuch as he could easily borrow it at the libraries at Bath; and, besides which, no doubt some abridgment of it had been published, which he could look into and digest more easily."

"But what is it all about?" asked Sophia. "We all know what economy means, and we

all know that political means what relates to politics. So, I suppose, political economy means the science of cheap governing?"

"I do not think that, either," said Sir Edward; "for it is well known that the Whigs understand this science better than the Tories; and yet when the Whigs are in office, the taxes are always greater, and the budget higher than when the Tories are in power."

"Oh, that proves nothing at all, in my humble opinion," remarked Lucy, who yet never professed to be remarkably strong in politics; "for we all know that profession and practice are two very different things indeed. The Whigs, as you call them, may know the theory of this science, and yet not put it into practice. My dear father always says, 'Rogues, all, my child, when they are in power—not a pin to choose between them.'"

The postman had just brought letters from London; and Sir Edward received the communication from Lord Swainton which was written at the Bull in Bishopsgate.

"He's a wonderful man," said Sir Edward.

"He is, indeed!" exclaimed Charlotte. "I never heard of such a case of disinterested and devoted friendship!"

Sir Edward read the letter aloud, notwithstanding Miss Lucy was present; and she now began to understand the heights and depths of Lord Swainton's devotedness. She, of course, joined in the general eulogies, whilst Miss Sophia asked to see the letter herself, that she might read the message of "dear" Sir Felix. This led to no small portion of quizzing on the part of Sir Edward, Charlotte, and Lucy; but Sophia took it in very good part, simply declaring, "that surely it was possible to admire a man, and yet not to love him."

"What have I got here?" asked Sir Edward, as he looked at a sort of lawyer's letter in a stiff round hand, and bearing a large black seal. "No bad news, I hope, to damp our joy: let us see."

The two Miss Clappertons immediately sprang on their feet, and looked over their brother's shoulders as he read the following communication.

"Furnival's Inn.

"SIR,

"It is our painful duty to apprise you, as solicitors of the late James Maplestone, Esq. of Ipswich, Suffolk, that he departed this life on Monday last, the 4th instant, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and that by his will he has left you his residuary legatee. We presume that you will attend his funeral, which is fixed by Miss Maplestone,—his only surviving second cousin, except yourself and your sisters, —to take place on the 11th instant at Ipswich, aforesaid. As our Mr. White was sent for by Mr. Maplestone, deceased, to make his will, and to arrange his affairs prior to his death, it may be right to add, that we apprehend the value of the residuary property is about 30,000*l.* to 35,000*l.* We should have apprised you of your cousin's indisposition, but that, in

consequence of the letter you wrote to him communicating your intention of becoming a candidate, on the Tory side, for the borough of Warnstable, he would not allow any letter to be written to you, lest it should disturb you in your various election arrangements; said he was most anxious for your success, and the last words he distinctly uttered were, 'Tell Sir Edward, I hope he will beat those rascally Whigs.' We have gone into these particulars that you may be able to judge for yourself, whether you will attend his funeral or not, since our Mr. White is fully convinced that if such attendance would interfere in any manner with the election aforesaid, were your cousin alive, and could give his opinion, he would say on no account so to attend.

"Allow us, sir, sincerely to condole with you on the loss of this most valuable friend, at the same time that we take the liberty to congratulate you on the bequest made by your late cousin in your behalf as residuary legatee. We have lost an invaluable client, whose death we shall never cease to deplore. We take the

liberty to add, that your cousin has left legacies of 5000*l.* each to your sisters.

"We have the honour to remain,

"Sir,

"Your very obedient humble servants,

"WHITE, BLACK, AND GREY."

"To Sir Edward Clapperton, Bart.
"Bath."

"Poor Mr. Maplestone!" said Sir Edward, when he had finished reading twice over the truly lawyer's letter of Messrs. White, Black, and Grey. "He was an odd man,—very cross — very severe, — very niggardly; but as out and out a Tory as ever breathed. The only newspapers he would allow to enter his house were, the John Bull, the St. James's Chronicle, and the Morning Post. The last words he ever uttered, you hear, were, 'Tell Sir Edward, I hope he will beat those rascally Whigs!' I told him in my letter, which I wrote him the same day that Lord Swainton informed me of Lord Robert having gone down from Bath to Warnstable, that perhaps I should have to

contest the seat with a young Whig Lord; but that I was determined to fight it out to the last. I never had a reply to this communication, and I now know the cause. He was so staunch a Tory, that I believe it would have broken his heart if I had been the Whig candidate."

"I had no idea Mr. Maplestone was so rich, Edward," said Charlotte, as she read with some satisfaction that she had not been forgotten in his will.

"I should not have expected 5000*l.*" said Sophia: "I am quite astonished at the amount of the legacy. I always was told that I should have something; but dear mamma never thought him worth more than 20,000*l.* altogether."

"His fortune must be very considerable," replied Sir Edward; "for Messrs. White, Black, and Grey estimate my residuary property at from 30,000*l.* to 35,000*l.*: then there are your two 5000*l.*; and I am sure he has not left less than that to Miss Maplestone, to whom we must immediately write a letter of

condolence; and to all the church schools in the place, and other church charities, he has likewise, I am satisfied, been very generous. His old servant, Luke Winter, has no doubt been provided for liberally; so that he must have died worth about 60,000*l.* I wonder who are his executors. No doubt some Tory neighbours, to whom he has doubtless left legacies."

"Of course you will go to the funeral?" said Charlotte.

"Undoubtedly," replied Sir Edward.

"Adieu to our Bath gaieties!" sighed Sophia. "I wish the good old man had lived a little longer, for his own sake, as well as for ours. I think he might have said something better, as his last words, than 'the rascally Whigs!' and now we have to go into mourning, farewell to balls, theatres, and assembly-rooms!"

"The ruling passion is strongest in death," replied Sir Edward: "and as good Mr. Maplestone was a high Tory all his life, it was not to be wondered at that he should feel

strongly at last when he had his only male relative in the world a Tory candidate to represent a mixed constituency. We must make allowances, Sophia: Mr. Maplestone never was a religious man, though the last words he ever said to me were, 'Stand by your church, Sir Edward,—your church has stood by you.'"

"Did he indeed?" asked Charlotte. "That proved he had some religion, Edward; for a man who had no religion, would not have cared about the Church at all."

"At least, he never went to church," replied Sir Edward.

"Oh, that proves nothing at all," answered Sophia; "for Sir Felix told me *he* had not been to church for seven years, and yet he added he would rather die than see the church attacked or overthrown by the Roman Catholics."

"Oh don't mention the Roman Catholics," said Lucy, "I never can bear to hear of them. Papa always says he'd rather be a Turk than a Roman Catholic."

"Well, I must get to the writing-desk,"

said Sir Edward, and thank Messrs. White, Black, and Grey for their kind letter, condole with our cousin Miss Maplestone, and let Lord Swainton know that I shall be passing through London the day after to-morrow, on my way to Suffolk, to attend Mr. Maplestone's funeral."

"And I think I had better write to Lady Muchberry and inform her that we must decline the party this evening," said Charlotte.

"Do you think so?" asked Sophia.

"Why I think not," replied Sir Edward. "It is only a small snug party, and as there must be an end of all festivities the moment I leave Bath to attend the funeral, we may as well avail ourselves of to-night's invitation and see what Bath society really is."

The Miss Clappertons and Lucy readily acquiesced in this arrangement; and after a few letters had been written to dear friends, to inform them of the melancholy event, by which their fortunes had been augmented 45,000*l.*, they proceeded to give most costly orders for almost royal mourning.

"I am enchanted to see you," said Lady Muchberry, as the Miss Clappertons entered her drawing-room at night, at the early hour of nine. "It is really very kind of you to oblige me by thus coming *sans façon* to our homely party. I fear you will find us all very stupid; but young Doveland and young Pallerstone are about giving us a charade, and Lady Witchie's grand-daughter and the Marchioness of Fairtown's niece also act with them. Come and sit by me, and I will let you know whom we have here."

Sir Edward looked round the room. He knew no one but Lord Nonpareil, who was most assiduous in his attentions, and with whom he soon knocked up an amusing sort of chat.

"I believe you belong to our opponents, Sir Edward," said his lordship, "though Toryism has seen its best days for years to come."

"Do you think so, my lord?" asked Sir Edward, in a tone of real curiosity.

"Undoubtedly I do," replied Lord Non-

pareil. "The Tories have had their day: it is our turn now. If we cannot get on without the Radicals, we must unite with them. This is an understood thing. Cost what it will, once in, we shall keep in; and every day convinces me more strongly than ever that we cannot be much longer kept out. The people call for a 'Reform of Parliament,' and what can we do but join the cry. If the Tories would consent to occasional disfranchisements of rotten boroughs, to some extension of the elective suffrage to large places, and to adopting such a general system of borough improvement, as would answer the cry for reform, then all would be well, and Lord John and Sir Robert might make up a joint cabinet; but such a plan would be laughed at by your party, and therefore we must encourage the cry for reform, in which you are sure to be beaten, make an alliance with the Radicals, obtain office, and keep you at arms' length for seven years to come. What may turn up between this and then no one can tell; but if we get the government in our hands

for seven years, it will be hard work for you afterwards to ride in our saddles."

"So that, in your opinion, my lord, any man wishing to get on in life by means of a seat in Parliament," replied Sir Edward, "should embrace the Whig side of the house; and not the Tory. But as I am wholly independent of all political parties or governments, as far as any advantage to be derived from them, no motives of that sort could influence me. The fact is, that this very day I have received a letter from London, apprizing me that one of my cousins has left us 45,000*l.* the bulk of his fortune, and we ought not, in strict propriety, to have been here to-night, especially as I must leave to-morrow to attend his funeral, in Suffolk; but I thought I would not disappoint my sisters, who so much anticipated their promised visit to Lady Muchberry."

"Oh, you are too good, indeed," replied Lord Nonpareil; "I am sure Lady Muchberry will feel your kindness in making this sacrifice of your feelings to gratify her by your society. Your cousin was a Clapperton then?" asked his lordship.

"No. He was a cousin on my mother's side," said Sir Edward, "an odd, eccentric, curious man; but a Tory to the backbone. His name was Maplestone. His was a Suffolk family."

"An Ipswich man, was he not?" asked Lord Nonpareil.

"The same," replied Sir Edward; "did you know him?"

"A little, and but little," said his lordship. I remember once canvassing him, long before I came to my title, in company with my friend, Charles Morgan, who was Whig candidate for the borough. Your late cousin received us with stiff and cold ceremony, and asked us to be seated; but when he had heard the object of our visit, and had satisfied himself that my friend was the Whig candidate, he broke out in very nearly the following strain:—

"No, gentlemen, you will not have my vote, nor my interest; but my strongest opposition. I know the Whigs, and hate them. You may be very good fathers, brothers, husbands, sons;

but you are rascally bad politicians. If your party, gentlemen, were in power, we should have the corn laws repealed, free-trade established, Catholics in the privy council, Dissenters in the House of Commons, all vested interests overthrown, the Church neglected, and the Radicals encouraged in their opposition to our old constitution. No gentlemen, you have made a false move here — and you 'll be checkmated."

"We saw," continued Lord Nonpareil, "in the twinkling of an eye that it was of no use to say another word: the term 'Whig' had startled him; and so we beat our retreat. I have often talked of the old gentleman since then,—he was so snappish, severe, and stubborn. He bowed us out of his house with all the coldness of a pillar of ice, and we wrote a cipher against his name, for we knew it would be useless to hope that he would change."

"Well, my lord, as far as I am concerned," said Sir Edward, "I confess I am not such a Tory as my late cousin; but I am a Church

and State man, and I never see the Whigs attentive to the interests of the Church."

"And never will, Sir Edward," replied his lordship. "We are no friends to a national religion. We would, if we could, abolish the union of the Church with the State tomorrow. We are no believers in Act of Parliament religions, and like to see all parties think and act as they will on religious matters."

"So that you would do away with a national religion, and leave the working classes without a parish church to which they might repair from week to week, and learn the soundest truths of morality and religion."

"No, I would not do away with the parish church; but I would have those who attended pay the parson, keep the church in repair, and so forth. Let them do as the Dissenters do: those who attend their chapels support them, and many of their ministers make a capital thing out of it too. I am told some of them get their six and eight hundred a year."

"But what would be the consequence of

your system, my lord," asked Sir Edward, "but this?—that where the inhabitants were few, and could not afford to support a parson, clerk, and so forth, there would be no service at all, since, as the endowments, tithes, Easter offerings, &c. would be taken away and abolished, the parson would have nothing to rely upon but the voluntary contributions of the parishioners, and these in hundreds of small parishes would not be sufficient to maintain them. Thus the people would soon be without a religion."

"That's no affair of ours," replied Lord Seabridge; "we have nothing to do with that. No doubt, God Almighty will take care of his religion without our aid. Our party is always opposed to any interference of man in religious matters."

"On this point we should not agree," said Sir Edward; "for I am a staunch Church of England man, and I say with Viscount Balford, 'I will ever stand by our glorious constitution in Church and State.'"

The conversation here dropped, as the "cha-

rades" commenced, and all occupied themselves with guessing the meaning of each new scene. Tea, cards, ices, quadrilles, all followed in rapid succession, and the evening went off remarkably well.

Before leaving, the Miss Clappertons communicated to her ladyship the intelligence of the death of their cousin; but expressed their hope that although they would thus be deprived, for some time at least, of enjoying such delightful parties as the one at which they had been present that evening, that herself and Lord Nonpareil would often consent to favour them with their society in quite a family way at their dinner-table, and to a quiet rubber or round game in the evening.

Lady Muchberry heard these expressions of hopes and desires with corresponding feelings of pleasure, and promised Sir Edward that during his absence "on his mournful mission" everything should be done that could be to keep up the spirits of the young ladies.

"You are too kind, indeed you are, my

lady," said Charlotte; and Sophia and Lucy were of the same opinion.

"We will come and see you to-morrow evening," replied her ladyship.

"Oh, not in the evening, but to dinner," said Charlotte; and Lady Muchberry consented.

Sir Edward Clapperton left Bath the next day for London. He travelled post, placed "Smith's Wealth of Nations" in his carriage, and resolved to study political economy from Somersetshire to Suffolk.

Lady Muchberry and Lord Nonpareil were faithful to their promise; and the dinner-table of the Miss Clappertons was graced by their presence.

"I am told your cousin was very rich," said her ladyship to Miss Charlotte, "and that he has done as he should do, left the bulk of his fortune to yourself and your sister."

"Not exactly so," replied Miss Clapperton; "my brother has thel argest portion of the estates; but my sister and myself have had a small legacy of 5000*l.* left to each of us. My brother is

residuary legatee, and the lawyers write word that it will be worth about 35,000*l.* We did not expect so much: but my cousin was a singular man, who concealed as much as possible what he was worth, and let not his right hand know what his left did. He seldom quitted Ipswich even for a day, and lived with his old maiden cousin, Miss Maplestone, like sister and brother."

"So that *your* legacies are in money, and your brother's portion in estates?" replied her ladyship, who already meditated making, on some future day, one of those friendly loans of her new acquaintances which she was in the habit of levying whenever her play debts became troublesome, and her purse light or empty.

Miss Charlotte replied, "That she really did not know: she left her brother to manage all these affairs; neither herself nor her sister ever troubled themselves about money matters; they all spent what they pleased, and did as they liked, and no one was answerable to the other."

That was agreeable intelligence to the Whig Lady Muchberry, who was often the victim of her love of gaming, and who frittered away a very fair income in the most absurd and ill-recompensing expenditure. Already she wrote, in imagination, one of her irresistible *billets doux* to the Miss Clappertons, begging the loan of their purses for a few days, as her agent was in arrear, or, as her banker had failed, or, as she had lost her pocket-book with notes of some importance, and did not like the trouble of advertising a reward. All these, and a hundred other equally correct excuses for asking the loan of a fifty pound note for a few days, had so often been made to every friend and acquaintance of her ladyship, that they all knew what was about to follow when the letter commenced with, "Will you, my dear Miss So-and-so—" But here were new victims: they were the uninitiated: they were wholly ignorant of her habits; and whenever the moment should arrive that prompt assistance should be required, there they were completely, as she hoped, within her power.

"I must dine with them often; amuse them with my descriptions of high life; get them to take a *tête-à-tête* dinner or two with Nonpareil and myself; make them gradually acquainted with those I can trust, and who will, if possible, raise me in their estimation, and, by degrees, I shall secure them. They are nice girls. They are very rich. They may just as well lend me a few hundred pounds as keep them locked up at some stupid banker's; and whilst I will take care they shall lose nothing in the end, an occasional loan will be convenient and agreeable."

"Lord Swainton tells me you play divinely," said Lady Muchberry as they left the dinner-table, where Lord Nonpareil remained with Major Browne, whom the Miss Clappertons had invited to meet his lordship. "Let us have some music this evening: Nonpareil is very fond of it."

The Miss Clappertons and Miss Lucy severally and respectively assured and reassured her ladyship, "that they hardly ever touched the instrument;" and in confirmation of the

truth of each one's statement, Charlotte said to Lucy, "Do I, dear?" and Lucy said, "No, love, that you don't!" and so it went round, each one telling a white fib in her turn, confident that she would thus secure a similar reply for herself when she should make the same appeal. In spite, however, of all these assurances, Lady Muchberry prevailed; and whilst Lord Nonpareil and Major Browne were sipping the claret of Sir Edward Clapperton, the sisters and Lucy were amusing her ladyship with overtures, duets, and even songs called Italian.

"Decent sort of people these," said Lord Nonpareil to Major Browne, after the ladies had retired.

"I don't know much of them," replied the major; "they are friends of Colonel Dawson's, the father of Miss Lucy; but they are very polite and obliging. No great walkers, I believe, any of them: I never see Sir Edward but in his chariot or carriage. Very generous at their table, and give excellent wines: but know nothing of backgammon."

The fact was that Major Browne had two standards by which he tried all his acquaintances: the one was their pedestrian capabilities, and the other their love of backgammon. Those who neither walked nor played he could not love, though he might commend.

"Do you know anything of their fortunes?" asked Lord Nonpareil.

"Indeed I do not; but Miss Lucy tells me they are very rich, and live in great style at Clapham."

"Swainton will do his best to help them spend their spare cash," said his lordship. "Do you happen to know anything of his acquaintance with them?"

"Not at all," replied the major: "his lordship owed Shortpoint a trifle on last season's play; but he paid him the whole very honourably the other day; and, indeed, they say that all his play debts are wiped off."

"He manages the election affair of Sir Edward," said his lordship; "and no doubt he has made some satisfactory arrangement."

Major Browne looked surprised. "Why,

what arrangement could he make, my lord? except he bought and sold the seat; and that would not be very easy to manage with such a place as Warnstable."

"Nothing is difficult, major, to Swainton, when he is resolved on carrying his point. Swainton is in heart a Whig, or rather a Whig-radical; but for years past he has seen that nothing was to be got in that quarter, and so he has flattered the Duke, and voted for Sir Robert, and hoped to be promoted to some colonial appointment. Hitherto he has failed in his object. If the Whigs come in shortly, he will turn back to his old friends. We all admit his talents, and avail ourselves of his services when we need them; but he plays so deep, and lies so stupidly, that people look shy at him, though all admit his abilities."

"The Clappertons are quite infatuated about him," said the major: "and as it is no business of mine, and his lordship is an amusing, pleasant companion, I see all and say nothing. I think it very likely that the eldest Miss Clapperton may one day become Lady Swainton."

"And Miss Sophia?" asked Lord Nonpareil, with some anxiety, "I have not seen her *cher ami*."

"Nor have I even heard talk of him," replied the major. "You must remember, my lord, that this is their first season of coming out; and so enamoured are they of high life, that I suspect no man without a title would stand the smallest chance. By the by, I think Lucy spoke of Sir Felix Montague as being a great favourite with the youngest Miss Clapperton; but I know of no particulars."

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted Lord Nonpareil; "that would be a good joke. Why Montague is one of my most intimate friends. Oh! the rogue! he has not said a word about it to me. I 'll pull his ears for him if he comes poaching in our Bath manor. How in the world could he know the Clappertons, who never saw the city in his life? of all people in the world Felix would be the very last I should have guessed. Do you know if he is acquainted with Swainton?"

"Most certainly he is," replied the major.

"I believe he is now his right hand man, and is mixed up some how or other in the Warnstable election business."

The whole of this intelligence was far from satisfactory to Lord Nonpareil, who had formed certain little schemes in his own favour, in the event of the death of a lady, once yclept his wife, who had given him much trouble, and who was now reported to be afflicted with an incurable disorder. Although Lord Nonpareil was a sort of pet lap-dog and intimate friend of Lady Muchberry, it was perfectly understood between them that their friendly arrangements were never to stand in the way of each other's promotion, and that her ladyship was at perfect liberty to marry whenever she should feel that her interests dictated that line of proceeding; as Lord Nonpareil was likewise equally free should his troublesome spouse take it in her head to die. As his lordship was justified in anticipating such an event very shortly, he was by no means indifferent to the charms of Sophia, especially as her fortune even eclipsed her beauty, and

gave increased interest to her other attractions.

The evening was spent in music, singing, backgammon, and a round game, and Lady Muchberry declared, "she never remembered to have been so agreeably and delightfully entertained."

"That eldest girl is in love with Swainton," said her ladyship to Lord Nonpareil, as he saw her home in her carriage; "and the youngest has seen your friend Montague at their own place at Clapham, and is quite as much in love with him. Has Montague ever told you he knew them?"

"Never," replied Lord Nonpareil; "but 'there is many a slip between the cup and the lip.' Swainton may pass; but Montague shall pay dearly for his secrecy. Good night."

"Good night, Nonpareil," said her ladyship, and the evening was ended.

The next two or three days the Miss Clappertons were occupied with the affair of the mourning. All the servants had to be measured and equipped. Mourning ornaments

and trinkets, mourning note and letter paper, mourning wafers and wax, and various other indications that some dear relative had died, leaving them 45,000*l.*, were prepared or purchased, the arrangement of which took some time, and gave a great deal of employment to the three ladies. Lucy was made to go into mourning too, of course at the expense of the Clappertons; and the carriage was covered with black cloth, and the Clappertons' arms emblazoned thereon. But all these were but sorry substitutes for the pump-room, the assemblies, the balls, the concerts, the theatre, they had in view; and often did the two fair ones wish that their cousin Maplestone would at least have remained at Ipswich in his old-fashioned house, and with his not less old-fashioned female cousin housekeeper, till the spring.

They heard from Sir Edward. He was well, and at Ipswich. They heard from Lord Swainton, he was "dying to see them again, and proposed to return with their brother." This was some consolation. Sir Felix Montague, too, was to accompany them. Their

house would soon be full. What a blessing! They lived, therefore, on expectation; wrote deep broad mourning bordered letters to all their friends, made themselves look quite bewitching in their black dresses, and contrived to be as happy as persons can be who deplore the unseasonable death of a wealthy cousin.

"Who can this letter be from?" asked Sophia of her sister, as the footman placed in her hands a few days afterwards a letter from London, just arrived by the post, and directed to her; "I do not know this handwriting at all. Who can it be from?"

"Come, open it, and let us see," said Charlotte, and her advice was quickly followed. But how great was their surprise when, in a handwriting wholly different to that on the envelope, they found the following note, without name, signature, or address inside.

"A friend of Miss Sophia Clapperton, who cannot at the present moment give his name, is compelled by a sense of duty and honour to warn her against one, who has some

intention of offering her his hand and his poverty and debts. Sir F—— M—— is without property, reputation, or honour. He is well known among the black-legs at Newmarket, and is the greatest spendthrift in the kingdom. He lives on his wits, deceives his best friends, and is an accomplished scoundrel. Perhaps the amiable person for whom this letter is intended will suspect the writer of being his rival; but he assures her that he is a married man, and has only acted as he has done from a wish to avert disgrace, shame, and perhaps poverty, from an honourable and a respectable family."

"I don't believe a word of it," said Sophia. "Who it is from, or why it is written, I know not; but I don't believe one word it contains."

Charlotte was less decisive in her conclusions; but Lucy leaned to those of Sophia, and asked, "Who would believe a writer of anonymous letters?"

The whole of them agreed that the most

correct course to be pursued was to forward the letter to Sir Edward, that he might either destroy it or show it to Lord Swainton, as he should deem best. As Sir Felix Montague had never made the slightest advances towards Sophia, they all concluded that the writer of the letter must be some one to whom he had communicated his intentions of doing so. Sophia said "that perhaps it was a joke of Edward's, because she had said she admired Sir Felix." Charlotte "thought that Edward was too much occupied at Ipswich to allow himself to waste his time in such follies." Lucy suggested "that Lord Swainton and Sir Felix might have quarrelled, and that perhaps the former had sent this singular communication." Poor Lucy had nearly got herself into trouble by such a suggestion as this, for Charlotte replied with indignation, "that she was sure Lord Swainton was as incapable as Colonel Dawson was, of writing anonymous letters;" and Sophia wound all up by declaring "that for her part she liked Sir Felix better than ever after this abominable attempt to injure

him in her estimation." Still it was resolved that the letter should be despatched to Sir Edward; and an hour afterwards it was forwarded to him at Ipswich. And here we must leave the ladies at Bath for a few days, where they contrived to live as gaily as persons in deep mourning can do, who pay any attention to the decencies of life.

CHAPTER IV.

All things that we ordained festival
Turn from their office to black funeral.
SHAKSPEARE.

Let such honours and funeral rites,
As to his birth and wealth are due, be first performed.
DENHAM.

NOTHING very remarkable transpired at the interview at Long's Hotel between Lord Swainton, Sir Felix Montague, and Sir Edward Clapperton, but still some account is essential. Lord Swainton and Sir Felix heard with unfeigned pleasure of the addition of 45,000*l.* to the family fortune, and for the first time it occurred to the former that it would be a most eligible match for his youngest daughter, if he could bring about her marriage with the young city baronet.

"Arabella is a lovely girl," said his lordship to himself, whilst Sir Edward and Montague were engaged in conversing about the outvoters, "full of life, charming eyes, admirable expression of countenance, the best tempered creature in the world, fond of balls, parties, plays, and everything of that sort,—just the very girl for Sir Edward,—but no fortune,—until after my death, and that of her aunt, Lady Margaret. She will then have 20,000*l.* but with a mortgage of 5000*l.* to redeem. What a fool I have been not to think of this before. I never hear of any *chère amie* of Sir Edward. If he had a little girl in view, I must have heard of it. I have been so occupied with my own affairs, and with this election business, that I have quite forgotten poor Arabella of late. This must not be. I must manage better than this. At her aunt Margaret's, where she has been spending off and on nearly two years, she sees no one,—is awfully *triste*,—writes me most deplorable letters, and would be delighted to see Bath. I will take lodgings near the

Clappertons, as soon as the election is over: bring her out in her best and finest: and see if young Sir Edward's heart can resist her charms and her loveliness."

Full of his own thoughts, and engrossed by the topic of his late reverie, Lord Swainton interrupted the conversation relative to the out-voters by one of his odd and abrupt sallies:

"You ought to get married, Sir Edward,—you really must get married; a charming girl, blue eyes, auburn hair, light complexion, expressive features, an angelic disposition, witty and wise, full of life, soul, gaiety, ——."

"Who?" asked Sir Edward, with a look of astonishment; "who, my lord,— whom?"

The fact was, that Sir Edward's mind was half-divided between the matter of the out-voters and Lord Swainton's sudden appeal to him respecting marriage, and he hardly knew what he replied. Lord Swainton perceived this, and, with true tact but with little truth, turned the conversation.

"I was thinking, Sir Edward, of my little

witch, of whom I have spoken to you before, and so rhapsodized in her praise."

Sir Edward thought no more of it: he had become used to Lord Swainton's singularities; and if his lordship had told him, "he ought to dance on the tight cord," he would not have been astonished. Sir Edward looked upon him as a man of genius as well as of rank, fortune, talents, and honour; but his eccentricities were too palpable to admit of denial.

Sir Felix Montague, who knew Swainton well, was not to be duped by his lordship's manœuvre. He saw clearly all that had passed in the mind of his friend.

"I'll bet any money," said Sir Felix to himself, "Swainton will be trying to marry one of his girls with Sir Edward. But which can it be? Dorothy is old and silly; Amelia is a widow, worn out with sorrow, and poor as her father; Kate is lively and passable, but I understood she had some chance in the Pelton family, with young Harry Pelton; it must be Arabella he has in view, and yet when I last saw her, she had neither rosy

cheeks nor auburn hair, for she was as pale as a light fleecy cloud, and her hair was raven black. But Swainton is so odd a fellow, that ten to one he has forgotten the colour of Arabella's hair. *N'importe*, if I can manage Miss Sophia with her increased attractions of 5,000*l.*, they may settle the rest as they will. I care nothing about the other arrangements."

Sir Edward became increasingly pleased with Montague. He was so thorough a gentleman; free, easy, elegant, one of the best dressed men in London, with a hand and a foot which would serve as models to Westmacott or David; full of wit and repartee, possessing a complete knowledge of the world, and simple in his manners and unostentatious in his tone. Sir Edward also observed with gratitude the pains he had taken with the out-voters, and read some letters which they had deposited in Sir Felix's hands from their relatives at Warnstable, all of which stated that Sir Felix's candidate should have their votes whenever an election should occur.

"I am sure, Sir Felix," said Sir Edward

Clapperton, as he read the last of these Warnstable letters, "I am under obligations to you, as well as to his lordship, which I fear I can never hope to repay; but remember, I am always at your service in any way in which you may be pleased to command my poor abilities."

"Should I ever have occasion to ask for your good offices, I will do so," replied Sir Felix; "but in the mean time pray say nothing more about what I have done, or may do. I am an idle man; a thing of this sort pleases me much: you are coming forward to support great principles; I am an out-and-out Tory, you are the same, and so long as we secure your return, and then a jollification at Bath with the ladies to felicitate you on your election, I shall be more than satisfied—I shall be delighted."

"Your election is sure, Sir Edward," said his lordship. "I would not give the underwriters at Lloyd's three per cent. premium on all the expenses to insure it. Ha! ha! ha! You see I know something of city affairs,—policies,—premiums,—underwriters,—Lloyd's,—Royal Ex-

change, — Lloyd's List, — Stock Exchange, — waddling ducks, — bulls, — bears, — puts and calls. Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he! Beggars description!"

"You are inexhaustible indeed, my lord," said Sir Edward; "but I believe I must be off, and will appoint to meet you this day week, to proceed to Bath. I must make my arrangements with my cousin's lawyers, attend his funeral, invite Macfarlane and my young friend Catherwood to accompany us; and, with your consent, we will fix one o'clock this day week to meet here and breakfast, preparatory to our departure for the west. As my sisters have need of the family carriage, which I have ordered to be put into mourning, I shall purchase a new four-inside one,— roomy, snug, well-cushioned, and all that sort of thing; and that with the post chariot will carry us down cozily to Bath and Warnstable. Do you approve of that, my lord?"

"Admirable," replied his lordship; "new carriage, striking colour; Clapperton arms, something stylish; astonish the weak minds

of the worthy natives at Warnstable; admirable — admirable! — beggars description!"

"But what is the opinion of Sergeant Sadface with respect to beautifying the theatre?" asked Sir Edward.

"Well thought of," replied his lordship, "this is the Case submitted to him, and his opinion thereon."

Case.

"In a certain borough in England, where the burgesses have the right to return two members, is a theatre. The theatre is large, old, and ugly, but well frequented, as the inhabitants are very partial to theatrical amusements. It is the property of the corporation, and is let by it to the troop of performers who come from year to year to enact Shakspeare and Sheridan. A candidate for the honour of representing the worthy burgesses in Parliament at the next election, having learnt that the theatre, though well filled during the season, is in sad want of painting, gilding, new scenes, and ornaments, proposes to direct these im-

provements to be made without delay, and to announce that intention to the electors in his address, inviting their votes and suffrages.

"Your opinion is therefore requested whether such an act of liberality, or its announcement, could be construed into bribery, and invalidate his election."

"I am of opinion that the conduct of the candidate in question would be perfectly legal, and that this case comes within the meaning of Sprat versus Herring, Term Reports, vol. 764, page 843, in which it was held that it was quite lawful to give a sprat to catch a herring; and I am also of opinion that there is nothing illegal in making the announcement of his intentions in his proposed address to the electors: vide Paywell against Nopay, Term Reports, vol. 950, page 360, in which it was decided that it is not bribery to let your right hand know what your left hand doeth.

"J. Sadface, Sergeant-at-law."

"That's as clear as the nose on your face,

Sir Edward, isn't it?" asked his lordship, "Ha! ha! ha! I've written to Sam Pocock and told him to set all hands to work without delay, and to get extra hands from Bath, Exeter, or wherever he will, so that by the time you arrive all may be completed. Beggars description!"

"You are the most wonderful man I ever knew in my life, my lord," said Sir Edward; "but have you given any directions as to the scenes, decorations, &c?"

"All settled — all arranged — got my friend Smallman to superintend the whole affair; a young architect from Exeter accompanies him — plenty of gold, plenty of lively colouring, plenty of striking scenes, all *ad captandum* — dazzle their eyes, cheer their hearts, win all their smiles, secure the corporation,—the most popular candidate that ever lived. Beggars description!"

"Upon my word, my lord, it does indeed," replied Sir Edward. "I begin to think it will be next to impossible to fail. Still allow me to say, that if I do succeed it will be entirely

owing to your and to Sir Felix's good offices."

"Oh, I am not entitled to that compliment," said Sir Felix; "it is his lordship who has managed all, and managed most admirably. If you are not returned at Warnstable, Sir Edward, my name is not Montague."

"Well, that is just my impression," replied Sir Edward; "but as it is well on all occasions to make security doubly secure, I beg you will remember, my lord, that notwithstanding our arrangements, if any extra expenses should be necessary, I am entirely at your disposal."

"Good — good," said his lordship, who was rejoiced to hear such a declaration, in the event of a contest; but as he never spoke of money matters before a third party, he simply added, "whatever's right shall be done, but nothing extravagantly."

If Sir Felix had dared to laugh he would have burst out into a most immoderate fit,— so he took to coughing, and to looking out of the window; and a few minutes afterwards they had all separated.

Sir Edward called at his friend Macfarlane's lodgings: he was still at Brighton. He wrote him a letter inviting him to the approaching excursion to Bath and Warnstable, to be present at the election, and assured him that no one would be received more cordially at Milsom Street by the ladies.

"My dear Mrs. Catherwood, how do you do?" asked Sir Edward, as he entered their quiet and comfortable city dining-room. "I could not come to London, even for a few hours, without calling on you."

"Just like yourself, Sir Edward," replied his charming and amiable friend. "I am as well as I can be, considering that Maria is very much indisposed, and I am her constant nurse."

"Maria!" said Sir Edward, with evident emotion, which he did not seek to conceal, "Maria very much indisposed! Why, how long then? How came you to be silent? Why did you not write to my sisters? What can be the matter with her? What can we do?"

"I did not like to disturb your cheerful

party," replied Mrs. Catherwood. "I know how fond you all are of her, and she forbade me writing; besides which, every day we have hoped she would get better, and that we might be able to announce the illness and the cure at the same time. She is rather improved, I think, to-day, and is coming down stairs to sit up an hour or two. If you can wait a quarter of an hour, she will join us."

"To be sure I can, Mrs. Catherwood," replied Sir Edward. "Oh! how deplorably annoyed my sisters will be to hear that Maria is ill!"

The quarter of an hour that he had to wait, before he saw Maria, appeared to him remarkably long. He talked of his departed uncle, and his increased fortune; of Lord Swainton, of Warnstable and Bath; but at last the door opened, and in walked Maria.

She looked more lovely than ever. Pale, thin, light, fragile, she appeared in all her pearly beauty before him.

"My dear Maria," said Sir Edward, "how dreadfully grieved I am to find you have been

so ill, and to see you still looking so pale! oh! how very unkind it was of you not to let us know! I don't know what Charlotte and Sophia will say. Why, we would all have come up and nursed you; every one of us, Lucy and all. You are one of ourselves, you know. I never can have any more confidence now. Do you suppose, if my sisters had been ill, I should not have written to you? Oh, Mrs. Catherwood, this is too bad! Are we not all brothers and sisters together?"

"To be sure we are," replied Maria; "but I was unwilling to damp your joy by my sorrows, especially as I expected to get well every day. Oh, it's all nothing, I dare say: the doctor says I am better. I shall soon be well again."

"Don't you think Bath air would be good for Maria?" said Sir Edward, with unaffected goodness. "You know, Mrs. Catherwood, that all I have is at your service,—house, carriage, doctors, servants, all; and if you and Maria will come down, my sisters and Lucy will nurse her, and take care of you."

"That will be quite impossible, Edward," said Maria with unusual firmness. "I am very much obliged to you; but when I am ill nothing is so dear to me as home: and my dear mother could not leave London at this time. I know she could not."

Mrs. Catherwood confessed it would be very difficult for her to do so; "but still she would make any sacrifice for the sake of Maria's health."

Maria however replied, "that she did not feel at all equal to a journey, or to new scenes and gaiety;" and Sir Edward did not of course press the matter further.

Between two and three hours he sat, however, and chatted; obtained Mrs. Catherwood's consent that her son might accompany him to Bath and Warnstable; fixed that he would call for him that day week; made Mrs. Catherwood also promise that she would write to him at Ipswich in two or three days and let him know how Maria was going on; and then took his leave.

"That girl 's a perfect angel," said Sir

Edward to himself, as he left Mrs. Catherwood to proceed to Clapham Hall for the night, prior to quitting the next day for Ipswich. "She would grace a palace, as she would charm a cottage. I have never seen such a girl in my life. It's a sad pity she should be buried in the smoke and noise of a city residence." Such were the meditations of Sir Edward till he reached Clapham Hall. There, other matters of a family and domestic character occupied his attention; and the next day he went to Suffolk.

Sir Edward found his old maiden cousin, Miss Maplestone, much changed. She felt alone in the world. Although her late friend and cousin was by no means an amiable man, yet, after twenty-five years' residence with him, he had become part and portion of her being. Even his scolding was missed; and as she was by no means fond either of reading, writing, or working, her life had for many years been devoted to his whimsicalities. His toast at breakfast she had no longer to spread; his sandwich at luncheon she had no longer to

arrange; his potatoes at dinner, which all the year round he would have served in their skins, she had no longer to peel; his walk from four to five, or from five to six, she could no longer take with him, for although he walked some fifty yards before her, still he was there, and she could exchange words with him when she desired; the little black terrier could no longer bark at his master with playful mirth; the parrot called and whistled in vain, for he who called it "his pet and his darling" could no more reply to its caresses; she had now to make tea for herself, and he could no longer complain that it was too weak or too strong, too hot or too cold, too black or too green; the newspaper kept on arriving day after day, and there was no one to tear off its envelope and read its contents, and yet she had not the courage to write and stop the paper; the backgammon board in the evening was no longer brought out; the cat went crying about the house for her lost master; and Miss Maplestone was dissolved in tears.

"You are very good, cousin," she said, "to

come down to see me, and to be present at the funeral. I don't know what I should have done without you. I feared your election would prevent you. The executors, Mr. Ostwall and Mr. Knight, two good Churchmen and back-bone Tories, are very attentive to me; but there 's nothing like one 's own relatives after all, you know, Sir Edward; and I feel almost happy now you are here.

Sir Edward assured her of the pleasure he had in seeing her, though how truly grieved he was at the occasion; but expressed his hope, that when her affairs and those of their deceased cousin should be a little settled, she would visit them at Bath, and seek for health and spirits in a change of air and scenery.

On arriving at Ipswich Sir Edward had put up at the inn; but he found his cousin so low spirited, and his society so much desired by her, that he yielded to her importunities, and changed his head-quarters to the family dwelling of the Maplestones. The next day the executors called on him, consulted him with respect to the funeral, which he wished to be

conducted on a more splendid scale than they had anticipated, and ordered an escutcheon for the front of the house. This pleased Miss Maplestone wonderfully. "Indeed, my dear cousin," said the old lady, "for the matter of that you are perfectly right; the Maplestones' is one of the oldest families in the county, and have no reason to be ashamed of their coat of arms."

"I am well aware of that, cousin," replied Sir Edward: "my mother's family had a princely origin, and what is much better, every one of them has always been kind hearted, and Conservative."

"Don't say merely Conservative," said Miss Maplestone, "but downright Tory — Church and King for ever! There are many people in this town who call themselves Conservatives, but who are not worthy of the name of Tories. The Maplestones, Sir Edward, are all Tories to the backbone, and zealous Protestants. Your poor dear cousin hated the Whigs as the devil hates holy water; and they hated him in return: there was no love lost, I assure you.

The Radicals here used to persecute him, teased him a great deal respecting a right of way they claimed over his meadows, and put him to a world of expense to defend his rights; but he would not yield, and beat the whole of them. The meadows are yours now, but without any footpath over them. Oh! he was a dear man for his rights."

The day of the burial arrived: Sir Edward was chief mourner; the clergyman, executors, medical attendants, tenants, and friends, all assembled. Sir Edward was costly in all his measures, and Ipswich had not witnessed such a funeral for many a long day.

On the evening of the day the will was read. The deceased had left the house and 10,000*l.* in the funds to his cousin Miss Maplestone, with full power of disposing of all by will; but in default of doing so, the money in the funds was left to the two Miss Clappertons, and the house to Sir Edward.

"My cousin has anticipated my intentions," said Miss Maplestone, with some dignity. "I have already bequeathed all that I might be

possessed of at my death amongst you; and I hope you will live long to enjoy it. I have not much longer time myself, I dare say: all my old habits will now be broken in upon; living alone will not suit my nervous character, and yet I should never be happy elsewhere; but God's will be done, we must leave all to him."

"I hope, if you do not come to Bath, we shall often see you at Clapham Hall," replied Sir Edward. "Large lawns, gardens, a soft air, and some agreeable society, will make you forget a portion of your sorrows; and do not forget that we also are your cousins, and will do all we can to comfort and soothe you."

"That I am sure you will, cousin," said Miss Maplestone; "and I shall never forget your visit to Ipswich this time, for I know how much at such a period it must have inconvenienced you."

Sir Edward remained three days after the funeral, settled with his cousin and the executors all that had to be done in pursuance of the wishes of all parties; and after having received a more satisfactory account of Maria

Catherwood, and left abundant testimonials of his generosity to the clergyman, medical attendants, steward, and servants of the deceased, he left Ipswich for London, to the very great grief of poor Miss Maplestone.

"I really will come and see you, cousin," said the old lady, as Sir Edward entered his chariot; and once more pressing his hand, added, "may God bless you, and give you abundant success against Whigs, Radicals, and Papists; and let me have the first letter you frank. Mind that."

"That you shall, cousin," replied Sir Edward; and one more good-b'ye finished his visit to Ipswich.

"That 's all right," said Sir Edward to himself, as the carriage rattled on towards London. "This is the luckiest windfall possible. I care not a straw about a thousand or two more, if necessary, to secure my election. This good old cousin of mine, Miss Maplestone, has not less than 5000*l.* of her own private property, and at least 20,000*l.* more under the will of my late cousin; and all these sums she

has left to us. We bid fair to become really wealthy; and all I want now is to get into Parliament: but then I must cut a figure there; so here 's for another dose of political economy."

Sir Edward accordingly resumed his readings of "Smith's Wealth of Nations," and stumbled on what he thought a bit of radicalism about corn laws. Smith had contended that no nation should exclude by permanent laws the corn and cattle of other countries; since, if any country should so act, it would incur the risk of not having its manufactures or products purchased by foreign nations, and would shut itself up in its own narrow and unimprovable limits.

"That 's radicalism," said Sir Edward to himself; "that smacks strongly of free trade, and free trade in corn above all other things in the world. I wonder what the Suffolk member, Mr. Cogan, would say to this, he who said; 'I have viewed with feelings of deep regret the repeated attempts which have been made to deprive the British farmers of legislative pro-

tection, so essential to the prosperity of that long depressed class of society.' Cogan's the sort of man my late cousin Maplestone approved. How he did hate Daffrell, with his love of 'reform!' Fushbrooke was one of his men, an out and outer, and no mistake. Renniker was another. My cousin called him the 'farmer's friend.' Fibson, however, was his chief favourite. He is a country gentleman of large hereditary fortune; and his declaration 'that there was no obnoxious law which might not be traced to Whig legislation,' my cousin had engraved and hung up in his drawing-room. Let me see, I copied the whole of it:—'It was to them the country owed the excise laws. The only obnoxious law they have removed was the pillory, and in this they clearly had an eye to their own interests, being the fittest subjects for it.'"

Of all the rides in the world, that from Ipswich to London is one of the least interesting; but Sir Edward contrived to pass his time very agreeably. He read Smith; prepared the

heads of his speech to the burgesses of Warnstable; resolved on rehearsing it at Bath to his sisters and friends; looked over some old family papers of the Maplestones, which were thought curious,—some grants of titles, long since lost in the lapse of centuries,—old quaint poetry of one who died mad from having "too much learning," and a sermon preached before Queen Anne, by another of the family, at St. James's Chapel. All these recollections of bygone days of greatness and renown Miss Maplestone had placed in the hands of Sir Edward, together with two silver pens, won at Westminster School by one of the founders of her family, and a satin band, with "Ignoramus" upon it, which was to her the greatest of these varied mysteries.

Sir Edward had received at Ipswich the letter from his sisters, which enclosed the anonymous communication relative to Sir Felix Montague. At first it annoyed him, then it made him laugh at the rising importance of their family; then it made him angry that any one should take the liberty of writing an ano-

nymous letter to his sister Sophia, instead of to himself, the head of the family; and, finally, he wrote the following few and hasty lines to Milsom Street.

"Dear Girls,

"With respect to the anonymous letter relating to Sir F—— M——, think no more of it. Whoever sent it was a coward, and no gentleman. Of Sir F—— himself, of course, I know but little, but that little is all in his favour. If, indeed, he ever should make any serious offer to Sophia, it will be time enough then to be more severe in our investigations. At present, all we know of him is, that he is a most gentlemanly fellow, zealously devoted to my interests, most busily employed in seeking to secure my election at Warnstable, and, above all, is a friend of our best friend, Lord Swainton. I thought, at first, of showing the letter to his lordship; but I shall not do this, as it may annoy him. Again, then, I say, think no more of it; but endeavour, if you can,

to make out who it can be who has written it."

The rest of the letter related to family arrangements for the reception of himself and his six guests at Milsom Street, in the course of a few days, on their way from London to Warnstable.

Sir Edward had written to Lord Swainton, Sir Felix Montague, and Captain Macfarlane, to favour him with their company to dinner on the evening of the day he proposed arriving in London, preparatory to the general assembly of friends the next morning at Long's to breakfast. Sir Edward wrote to Ibbotson's Hotel, to order his own apartments and dinner; and at seven o'clock all were assembled.

Captain Macfarlane was in excellent spirits: he mounted his very best and newest embroidered frock coat on the occasion; congratulated his friend, Sir Edward, "with all his heart," on the recent addition to his fortune; heard of the further certainty of 25,000*l.* on the death of Miss Maplestone; and which

new fact Sir Edward communicated to his friends soon after his arrival; and now only longed once more to see the Miss Clappertons to complete his bliss.

Lord Swainton was the merriest of the merry. He laughed, he joked, he hummed tunes which he could not sing; poured out libations of sauterne, hock, and soda; and talked, bounced, fibbed, dramatised, poetised, and everything else, to the great amusement of Sir Edward.

Lord Swainton read the report of the architect relative to the advancing state of the improvements at the theatre; letters received by the outvoters from their relatives at Warnstable; and the following characteristic letter from Sam Pocock, who, though rich and prosperous, was by no means sound in his grammar or orthography.

"My Lord,

"All's rite—rite has rite can bee. No mistake. The Theeater besiness has closed the matter. Thear his no gettin out of that.

The Burrgesses is all for Him now. Let who will cum, hee is the man—and theare 's no disputin it. We had a meetin yesturday, and a wery good meetin it was. We drank as loyall boys should,—and a nicer piece of dainer, no Gentlemen ever satt down two. Of course we drank your helth, and the helth of the Candidate; and may the generall helection cum soon. No one smells a Ratt yett. Sur Oscar keeps it all werry snugg — and no one guesses him yet. All 's rite 's the wurd. Lett mee know the day you will all cum, and depend on mee for all the rest. No one has been yett to ask about the Burrough. I don't much believe in a hopposition now, — butt nothin is never sartain in this ere plase. So no more att pressent from

"Your wery hobedient,

"Sam Pocock."

"Warnstable."

They all laughed soundly at poor Sam, but nevertheless did him the honour to drink his health, and charged his lordship, when he next

wrote, to be the bearer of this piece of intelligence.

"I 've resolved on studying political economy, my lord," said Sir Edward, with that good tempered *naïveté* which ever distinguished him.

"I wish you joy of your occupation, Sir Edward," replied Lord Swainton. "If there be a dull, dry, heart-aching, head-aching, back-aching, botherationizing business in the world, it is what men call political economy. It came all the way from Scotland—travelled to France—got to Germany—played up all sorts of tricks in England—has driven poor Dorrens wild with it—turned the head of Scouring, infected the Chronny, humbugged the Globe, and taken in the Universe. No, no, Sir Edward, you had better study blue eyes, or even brown paper, than political economy. Ha! ha! ha!—a fine young fellow like you, at your time of life, unmarried, with large fortune, charming sisters, amiable friends, and everything in the world, to talk about studying political economy! Why it will make

you as dry as a stick; as hard as stubble; as cold as the North Pole; as unfeeling as whalebone; as blunt as a grindstone; and as unhappy as a Whig out of place, or a Tory in a minority. Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!"

"And yet still I take it, my lord, that all our great men were political economists, were they not? Pitt, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Lord North, Canning, Romilly."

"Not they, indeed, for they were all gentlemen. Who in the world would bother himself about political economy who had good estates, ready wit, plenty of money, or even good expectations? I will tell you, Sir Edward, who studies political economy: lecturers, at so much per head — writers, at so much per line — little men, who have nothing to economize for themselves, since they are reduced to the lowest point of economy already — and great dunces, who hope to cajole the public with phrases for facts, and theories for experience. No man of any great talent or sterling reputation in Parliament is a political

economist. You must not imagine that the Whigs are one bit more economists than the Tories. They raise a cry of 'Down with the Corn Laws,' to embarrass the Tories, to secure themselves office, or to get up a majority to turn out a ministry, or to turn in themselves; but they laugh quite as much as we do at free trade in corn. The manufacturing members in the House of Commons are obliged to patronize this new-fangled system; but they estimate its real value just as low as we do. It would suit them to take foreign corn for their own manufactures, and bring it into the home market at even a reduced rate, and still they would be gainers by the exchange. But they know quite well, that this is robbing Peter to pay Paul, and that the end of this, if it were allowed to continue, would be a national bankruptcy. Corn and wool are more important to us than Manchester goods, or Birmingham and Sheffield ware. When the Whigs encourage the cry of 'cheap bread,' they mean nothing more than to make a party stir, to throw out a tub to the whale, to excite the populace against

the Tories, and to secure a majority at approaching elections, either to throw out the Tories when in, or keep the Tories out when they, the Whigs, are in office. The Radicals even are not one particle more sincere. The Radicals, indeed, are generally elected by manufacturing districts, and they are obliged to pledge themselves to the artisans and manufacturers, that they will support a free trade in corn; but they know very well that if the Corn Laws were repealed altogether, and the English manufactured goods were paid for in foreign corn, there would be such a glut in the market, (provided the duty was taken off altogether,) that no cultivator of land, either landlord, tenant, or middleman, could get enough for his corn to make it worth his growing; and if the duty on foreign corn should be such a fixed duty as to keep the average price at a certain fixed rate, the manufacturers would not be benefited, for the moment the price was remunerative at home, enough would be grown at home, and the foreigner could not compete with us. Thus one of two results must arise

from any interference with the Corn Laws. Either all duty must be taken off, and then corn would be a drug, the landed interests would be ruined, and the country be at the mercy of foreign markets; or else only a small fixed duty would be imposed, and then the quartern loaf would not be the least affected in price all the year round, and present prices would be maintained. Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, Sir Edward, all humbug the people in their turn. The people, though humbugged a million times, consent to be cheated a million and one times. None are so confiding, so unsuspecting, so believing, as the people. Though themselves, their fathers, their grandfathers, and their great grandfathers, have been deceived over and over again respecting the 'cheap loaf,' which they have never had, and which they were told depended on alterations in the Corn Laws, sometimes with one scale of duties, and then with other scales, and sometimes with next to prohibition, and at other times with next to free entry; the 'cheap loaf' so often promised has never

made its appearance; — and yet the people believe it will. Always believing, always hoping, always disappointed, and yet always hoping again. Whigs, Tories, Radicals, all cheat them in their turn. Beggars description! Beggars description!"

"And yet, my lord," said Captain Macfarlane, "though Whigs, Tories, and Radicals have in their turn all deceived the people, *i. e.* the populace, with false hopes and unrealised promises, still you must admit that the Whigs have had fewer opportunities of doing so than the Tories. How rarely are the Whigs in office, and how short, generally, is the duration of their administrations. Nor do I see that their conduct, whether good or bad, makes any great difference with respect to the science of political economy. In spite of all that may be said for or against its professors, the science exists, it has its doctrines, its principles, its text books, its catechisms, its essays, its rudiments, and its more profound discussions; and it is not because the French economists have gone too far, or the English have

not gone far enough, that the science is to be condemned altogether. I know it is the fashion for the Tories, as a party, to laugh at it; but ridicule is not, and never can be the test of truth. I think our friend, Sir Edward, would do well, my lord, to study the science, since he is not bound to become a quack, because he reads Smith, or studies Say."

"Very true, captain, very true," replied his lordship; "but as a man is known by the society he keeps, so, as no Tory would give a straw for political economy now, it is of no use for a man like Sir Edward to separate himself from the studies and opinions of his party. Brougham was right when he said that a man had better support even the errors of his party, than ever vote or act against it. But this is dry stuff for a meeting like the present, and with Sir Edward for our host too. Ha! ha! ha! Like talking astronomy to a new married couple; or mineralogy to a couple of lovers. Ha! ha! ha! Beggars description!"

"Sir Edward," said Montague, "there is

one science we all believe in, and all practise; there may indeed be some quacks, who even profess that, but at least all *here* are sincere: the science of love, of love for the ladies—our polar stars—or loadstones—our everything. Let me then propose, 'the Miss Clappertons and the ladies.'"

This toast was drank with real enthusiasm; and the Captain was, if possible, the loudest in his cheers. Sir Edward made "a neat and appropriate speech," not so long as to weary, nor so short as to mean nothing. He declared his sisters to be two unsophisticated girls, and, as a proof that "when the wine is in, the wit will come out," he added, "and whoever shall be so fortunate as to gain their affections will have prizes."

"In more ways than one," whispered Montague to Lord Swainton, who entreated Montague to sing "Oh, lady fair!" Montague complied. Wine and singing closed the evening: and it was not a short one.

The next day at two o'clock Sir Edward called on the Catherwoods, according to pro-

mise, and found Maria in better health and spirits.

"Why, Maria!" exclaimed Sir Edward, "you look ten thousand pounds better since I last saw you, and that makes me certainly much more than ten thousand pounds happier. It is quite delightful to see such an improvement. I shall return to Bath in good spirits, and cheer up those of my sisters, which have been much depressed by the news I sent them when last here. Pray take care of yourself for all our sakes; for to have anything happen to you would break all our hearts."

Maria smiled meekly and sweetly. There was something like complacency when she did so, still mingled with a small portion of anxiety.

"You are very good to say so," she replied, "I am sure I never had kinder letters in my life than I have received every day from Charlotte and Sophia since they heard from you of my illness. It is worth while being ill to know that one is loved."

"You could never doubt that, I hope, Maria," said Sir Edward with a sort of trembling, half choking emotion.

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Catherwood, "no one can doubt that you all love her, and the conduct of all your family, Sir Edward, has always proved it."

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Catherwood," replied Sir Edward with some emotion; "you are more just than Maria."

"No, no, indeed, mamma is not," said Maria, stammering, or rather hesitating a little; "I know you are all very good, and I thank you a thousand times."

At this moment young Catherwood made his appearance. He was radiant with joy. He loved Sir Edward Clapperton most truly, and the prospect of two or three weeks frolic at Bath and Warnstable, now that Maria was better, was to him full of untold bliss.

The visit of Sir Edward was necessarily short; he promised to write to Mrs. Catherwood, and let her know the result of the election each day in the event of a contest; and Maria added, "Ah, do now; don't forget that, we shall all be anxious."

"Shall you?" replied Sir Edward; "well,

that's very kind of you. Good b'ye, my dear Maria,—farewell Mrs. Catherwood; I know I have *your* good wishes."

"Indeed you have," said Mrs. Catherwood, as the door was closing.

"And mine too," added Maria, but in so low a tone that it was very doubtful in Mrs. Catherwood's opinion whether he heard her.

"What did Maria say?" asked Sir Edward of her brother.

"She said, 'and mine too,'" replied young Catherwood.

"Oh, did she?" asked Sir Edward; and they drove off to Long's Hotel.

There they found Lord Swainton, Sir Felix Montague, Scrope, Captain Macfarlane, and a letter from Captain Smallman promising to meet them at Bath, with good news and most satisfactory reports from Warnstable.

After breakfasting "*à la merveille*," and laughing most heartily, it was arranged that Sir Edward, Lord Swainton, Sir Felix, and Captain Macfarlane should go in the new family carriage purchased for the occasion,

and that Scrope and young Catherwood should occupy the post-chariot.

Whist, conversation, écarté, and a little downright gaming, were the business or amusements of the first carriage, whilst Scrope and young Catherwood became excellent friends in the second; talked about everything and everybody, till they were wearied and sleepy; and all arrived the next morning about lunch-time, according to appointment, at the splendid mansion in Milsom Street. The Miss Clappertons looked "wonderful" in mourning; Lucy was beautiful; and when the gentlemen all descended to a "*déjeûner à la fourchette*," and found so splendid a repast, and so welcome and warm a reception from the ladies, Lord Swainton involuntarily exclaimed, "My dear Miss Charlotte — this beggars description!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted all the ladies at once — and seldom (notwithstanding the late mournful death of cousin Maplestone) did any breakfast-party feel or act so mirthfully.

CHAPTER V.

The constant design of these orators in all their speeches was to drive some one particular point.

SWIFT.

His feeling wordes her feeble sence much pleased
And softly sunk into her molten hart.

SPENSER.

"LET us act the approaching election at Warnstable," said Lord Swainton, to Sir Edward and the rest of the gay circle in Milsom Street: "as the ladies cannot accompany us thither, we may as well make them laugh at home. Come, Scrope, you shall be mayor; I will propose Sir Edward to the worthy burgesses; Montague will second the motion: perhaps Captain Macfarlane will be good enough to stand as an opposition, or Whig candidate; Captain Smallman will propose him to the

burgesses; and young Mr. Catherwood will at any rate be able to second the proposition, should his modesty, which I hope it will not, prevent him from making a speech. The ladies and ourselves will then proceed to the poll; and after the poll is closed, Scrope will announce the numbers, and the successful candidate will return thanks; whilst the unsuccessful one will do, as all other candidates do under similar circumstances, predict that the next time the result will be very different."

"Oh, that will be delightful!" exclaimed Charlotte.

"Really, my lord, you are very kind to think of our amusement," said Sophia.

"I hope the speeches will be long," added Lucy, "and that it will take up all the morning; for it is impossible to stir out such wretched weather as this. I trust, my lord, the mayor will insist on long speeches."

"I will do my best to enforce your wishes," said Scrope; "but, generally speaking, mayors and high-sheriffs use their utmost exertions to curtail, instead of prolonging, the pro-

ceedings. It is one of the most thankless of all posts, that of mayor or high-sheriff at a contested election. If he be a partial man, and a party man, he is railed at by the opposite side; if he be impartial, both abuse him; if he takes an interest in the proceedings, he is called an interested party; and if he simply puts to the vote the propositions submitted to the electors, and seeks to make an accurate calculation of numbers at the show of hands, he is called dull, lifeless, stupid, and inactive. However, as my father *will* make me Mayor of Warnstable, I will do the best I can to preserve order, though, if I may judge from the riotous breakfast we have just terminated, my task will be difficult. I ought to have halberd men and constables to preserve the peace; but I must throw myself, and the cause of order, and the laws, on the public virtue and character of this noble and respectable meeting."

Lord Swainton and Mr. Catherwood then busied themselves in preparing the hustings. Counterpanes and carpets covered two large

mahogany tables, the legs of which were tied together; chairs were placed on the tables, and the ladies remained in their accustomed seats.

The business of the day was opened by the worthy mayor (Scrope) taking the chair, and reading, in a sort of murmuring tone, which was next to inaudible, the sham writ from the crown office, calling on the burgesses of Warnstable to elect a true and faithful, legal and loyal burgess, to represent them in Parliament, a seat being vacant in consequence of the Honourable Sir Oscar Morbleu, Baronet, having accepted the Chiltern Hundreds. Having read the writ in due form, Miss Lucy asked the mayor, if it was their duty to applaud? She observed "that not having been able to understand more than ten words of the writ, which were 'George the Fourth, by the grace of God,' and 'God save the King,' at the end, she took it for granted that all the rest was dog-latin, and that the electors were expected to applaud."

The mayor assured the lady elector, "that

this was the first time such a question had presented itself, or had been presented to him, since he had held the high and honourable office of mayor; but that he would consult the town-clerk, and if necessary take counsel's advice. He thought, however, it had been decided in the case of 'Clap-rap against Clap-trap,' that all applause was permitted and lawful at all borough elections, provided the candidates and officers then and there present were not deafened or stunned by the same.—*Vide* Hardwick's Reports, vol. xxxvi. page 470. There was likewise, he thought, another case reported in Merivale, which went much farther, and even to the effect that an action did not lie against an elector for having shouted so loud in another elector's ear as to occasion *temporary* deafness."

This decision of the mayor was received with deafening shouts from the three noisy electresses, mesdames Charlotte, Sophia, and Lucy.

The mayor then rose, and desired that order might be preserved, and expressed his hope

that the large and respectable assembly he was addressing would feel the dignity of their mission and the sublimity of their object; "for what," he added, "could be more sublime than to behold so many free-born Britons and Britonesses, called together to elect a man who should represent all their interests, — explain all their wants, — defend all their rights, — protest against all their enemies, — secure them all their privileges, — and, in one word, be their true and faithful, loyal and disinterested burgess in Parliament."

At this moment Lord Swainton, who had become weary of the preliminary measures and not a little rickety and fidgety, had by degrees so moved his chair that two legs were slipping off the table, when Miss Charlotte, perceiving his danger, gave so fearful a scream that his lordship saved himself by springing on his legs to her relief. This occasioned for a few minutes a suspension of public business; but it was resolved, and carried into effect, to prevent a recurrence of similar dangers, that the legs of all the chairs placed on the tables

in a row, should be tied together, and thus secure their occupants from like misfortunes. These arrangements having been completed, and silence being restored, Lord Swainton rose and spoke as follows:—

"Mr. Mayor, and fellow burgesses of the ancient, independent, and incorruptible borough of Warnstable. — Not only incorrupted do I say, but incorruptible: not only never yet corrupted, not now corrupted, and never will be corrupted; but, what is far better than all this, incorruptible. Or, as if I said to you, fair burgesses of this incorruptible borough, that you, yes, you yourselves, are incapable of injustice, incapable of unkindness, incapable of being insincere. These are vices which do not belong to your natures; these are failings which are opposed to the principles of your being; you would cease to be yourselves if you were either. As light cannot be darkness; as night cannot be day; as sweet cannot be bitter; as seraphs cannot be satyrs; and as angels cannot be demons: so neither can the electors of Warnstable be corrupted. Bribery is as opposed

to their character as water is to fire; as oil is to water; as virtue is to vice; and, as I am opposed to all, who are not the willing and devoted slaves of the fair sex. Beggars description!" (Great cheers from the ladies.) "And how cheering is this fact, that I am addressing to-day an assembly of virtuous citizens met together, as our worthy mayor has told you already, to exercise one of their highest privileges, wholly uninfluenced by any sordid considerations, by any pecuniary or unworthy motives, or by any other desire than to select the most fitting person to represent in the Commons House of Parliament this pure, noble, dignified, great, populous, ancient, and immortal borough! Beggars description!" (The ladies again became exceedingly clamorous.) "How gratifying then it must be to me, at a moment like the present, when the most fearful principles are abroad, when anarchy, under the garb of reform, is once more raising its hideous head; when our oldest and dearest institutions, both in Church and State, are threatened by the daring hands

of those who feel no respect or gratitude for the antiquity of our glorious constitution; when that constitution, which hath stood for centuries is again, perchance, to be called on to fight a severe if not a decisive battle; when, in one word, all is dark above, mysterious around, and trembling and shaking beneath us, to have the high privilege and the unbounded honour of proposing to represent you in Parliament one whose upright, respected, and virtuous family is a guarantee to you for his principles; who has been brought up to love the Church, to honour the King, to obey the laws; who is young, ardent, in the spring-time of life, full of health, vigour, zeal; who is attached to the constitution of his country, attached to the soil of which he is a landholder; attached to the mercantile interests at the same time — his illustrious father having amassed by such pursuits a large and commanding fortune; attached, in one word, to all most valued by Britons, their Church, their King, and their laws. Beggars description!" (Renewed applause: Sir Edward looking most modestly, and evidently dreading the

moment when he should be required to speak.) His lordship then continued as follows: —

"I say then, Mr. Mayor, when we think of the present agitated state of the public mind in France; when we think of the consequences which must ensue from another outbreak in that country; when we think of the not less unsettled state of Spain; when we think of the increased demands of the Irish rebels; and above all, when we think, that perhaps an attempt will be made to disfranchise this immaculate borough on the novel pretext of it being inaccessible to corruption, I do feel happy, proud, delighted, honoured, in being permitted to propose to you the name of Sir Edward Clapperton of Clapham Hall, in the county of Surrey, Baronet, as indeed, a fit, and truly a most worthy and most proper person to represent you in Parliament. Possessed of an ample fortune, he no sooner heard that your theatre was in a dilapidated state, than he decided it should be beautified and adorned. Attached to the name of Shakspeare, he could not bear that his inestimable plays should be represented in a theatre unworthy of

his name; and does not this speak volumes for him who now aspires to the distinction of representing such a borough in Parliament?" (Cries of "It does" — "It does," from the ladies; and of "It's all bribery," from Captain Smallman.) "Who dares to make use of the word bribery?" asked his lordship, "in this pure and incorruptible borough? Let him go hide his head with the bats and owls, and other hideous things of darkness and the night! Bribery at Warnstable! Out with the accuser! Let him not remain in an assembly of pure and patriotic burgesses!" (Cries of "Out with the libeller!" from Sir Felix and the ladies.)

"I rise, Mr. Mayor, to order," cried Captain Macfarlane. "The honourable gentleman whose expulsion is now demanded states an opinion. He is of opinion that the paltry, shabby trick of beautifying the theatre, as it is called, with a little paint and gold leaf, and a few new scenes, bedaubed and bedizened by wretched public-house sign-painters, is an act of bribery. I know this is also the opinion of Sergeant Sadface."

"I dare Captain Macfarlane to prove his words!" cried Lord Swainton; "here is his opinion in my pocket, and I will read it to you." ("Read! read!" cried the ladies.) "Yes, I will read it, most worthy burgesses and ladies," cried Lord Swainton; and then he read the real case which had been submitted to the Sergeant and his opinion thereon, which has already been inserted in the last chapter. ("Bravo! bravo!" cried the ladies. "What do you say now, Captain Macfarlane—Captain Defeated?")

Macfarlane affected to pull another opinion of Sergeant Sadface from his pocket, and read as follows: —

"He who gives or promises with a view of obtaining a vote at any election, either to a man, woman, or child, or who does any one act by which the property of the corporation or borough is improved and augmented in value, also with reference to any election, is guilty of bribery; and if the said acts, gifts, or promises be proved, his election is null and void."

(Signed) "SERGEANT SADFACE."

"And what is this beautifying the theatre of Warnstable, but improving the property of the corporation? It is mean, pitiful, and contemptible bribery." (Hisses from the ladies; and agitation on the platform.)

Sir Felix Montague. — "Take down his words. We will prosecute him." (Cheers from the ladies.)

Captain Macfarlane. — "We defy your threats. We come to cleanse the Augean stable."

Lord Swainton.—"Augean stable yourself, and see how you 'll like it."

Miss Lucy.—"Down with the Captain."

Miss Sophia.—"Long live Sir Felix!"

Miss Charlotte.—"Go on, Lord Swainton, go on."

Lord Swainton again rose, and observed in conclusion, "That after the truly flattering manner in which he had been called on to proceed in his observations by the grace, the life, and the ornament of that and of every other society into which she might enter, he felt it was right to make two or three closing remarks.

He said be observed that men with empty pockets, cold and frigid hearts, charlatans in politics, and selfish lovers of that sort of economy which deprived a borough election of all its life, fun, and amusement, were always very clamorous against bribery." ("That's the reason you have been speaking half an hour against it," cried Captain Smallman.) "But those," continued his lordship, "who, like my friend Sir Edward Clapperton, would not so insult you as to offer to purchase your votes, but who would delight to see your borough rich, powerful, prosperous, gay, and happy, are accused of bribery, forsooth, because they do not encourage dirty, whitewashed walls, or cobwebs, at a borough theatre. My candidate is young, handsome, full of honour, health, wealth, talent, zeal, everything;—beggars description! We shall see this anti-theatre improvement-man presently — this Scotch Mac — with his little "Small-man" from Exeter to propose him; we shall hear what he has to say to some questions we have to put to him; and then we shall leave with confidence his case in

your hands. Burgesses of Warnstable, let us make heaven's vaulted roof ring again with our cries of LONG LIVE SIR EDWARD CLAPPERTON! Beggars description!"

The ladies waved their dear little perfumed handkerchiefs; Charlotte threw some monthly roses from the bouquet standing on the sideboard at the foot of Lord Swainton, who raising them kissed them, pressed them to his heart, and cried aloud, "These are my laurels — this my civic crown—perennial as the virtue and the beauty which have bestowed them." As this looked a little personal, poor Charlotte blushed a great deal, and Sophia and Lucy tittered. Sophia now fixed her eyes on Sir Felix Montague, whose turn it was to speak, and to second the nomination of Sir Edward.

"Mr. Mayor," said Sir Felix, "and you fair and graceful ones who have condescended to descend from your aerial excursions to sojourn awhile with us, the mere burgesses of a county borough in the West of England. Your bright eyes, flowing locks, kind and ge-

nerous expressions, unbounded benevolence, graceful movements, delicious urbanity, have rendered my task doubly difficult, and my duty trebly arduous. If you were not there as my hearers, it would be easy to descant on the talents, virtues, public and private character, accomplishments and capabilities of my esteemed and honourable friend, if he will allow me to call him so,—"

Sir Edward and Sophia both said "Certainly" at the same moment.

"Sir Edward Clapperton. It would be easy to extol his noble hospitality, his true courtesy, his gentlemanly bearing, his well-gained reputation as a man of high honour and distinguished worth, and to place him before you as he ought to be placed, though by one more able than myself."

"No, no," said Sophia and Lucy, "no one is more able."

"I thank you, ladies, I thank you a thousand times, from the inmost recesses of my heart I thank you, for this proof of your kindness; but how do these acts of your bene-

volence tend to render each moment the task imposed on me, however delightful, yet more difficult to fulfil. If you were not present, and if your attractions did not overpower, and your charms both of virtue and grace did not thus wholly incapacitate us from an undivided attention to the question before us,—how easy it would be to ask of these burgesses, What would you that your representative should be?—A gentleman of good family? Take Sir Edward Clapperton. A man of fortune and of leisure to devote himself to your interests? Take Sir Edward Clapperton. A man of great sense and valuable acquirements? Take Sir Edward Clapperton. A man who by his landed estates is connected with the soil of this county, and yet who by his acquaintance with the commerce and trade as well as manufactures of the land, should be able to understand and sympathize with your local interests? Take Sir Edward Clapperton. A man attached to Church and State, to the throne and the altar? Take Sir Edward Clapperton. You have had enough of old men, too worn out

to attend to your interests. You have had enough of military men, who get into Parliament to secure their own promotions. You have had enough of mere commercial men, whose privilege of franking and having their letters franked, is worth hundreds of pounds sterling per annum to member-merchants, and who get into Parliament only to promote their own interested views of political economy. You have had enough of young Whig lords, the eldest sons of Whig peers, who get into Parliament to save them from prison for their debts, which debts go on increasing until their fathers die and they step into their fortunes and their titles. You have had enough of Radical representatives, who, instead of attending to your borough interests and to your individual wants and wishes, are continually frustrating both by offending the Government by their idle pranks and political absurdities; —of all these you have had enough. Now vote for an independent member; for a gentleman who, having no favour to ask for himself, will be better entitled to ask for favours

for yourselves, his electors; for a man who will encourage your local institutions, your borough charities, your trade, your manufactures, and, in one word, will be to you what a wealthy elder brother is to the younger branches of a dependent and yet honourable family. Elect then Sir Edward Clapperton! He is the friend of the orphan, the widow, the destitute, the afflicted! He is the friend of the merchant, the farmer, the manufacturer, of the shipping interests, and of our glorious navy. He is prepared to devote to you his time, his fortune, his energies, his all. He will visit your port, frequent your ball-rooms, lead to them the most accomplished and amiable of that sex to which we owe all our happiness; and will thus add to your happiness, your joy, and your renown."

Miss Sophia took the lead in the applause of Sir Felix; but though she took the lead, both Charlotte and Lucy were enthusiastic in their plaudits.

When the applause which followed this speech had subsided, and the ladies had finish-

ed complimenting Lord Swainton and Sir Felix Montague,

Captain Smallman rose, and spoke as follows:—"If, Mr. Mayor, the noble and honourable mover and seconder of the nomination of the Tory candidate on this occasion, confessed themselves somewhat abashed and confounded by the array of bright eyes and beauteous faces in this hall, at this election, notwithstanding it would seem that both themselves and their candidates were special favourites with those whose frowns are death, and whose smiles are life and joy;—what must be my feelings of trepidation and anxiety, I, who am a stranger amongst you, I, who have but as yet made my *début* before those who compose this assembly? Believe me when I say, that but for a sense of imperative duty, I should have abandoned my part in this day's proceedings, and have left to stouter-hearted men than I am, the task of imploring your support. But that sense of duty is indeed imperative. I come here to-day to rescue your borough from Tory influence, and to bring it under

the more genial protection or direction of the Whigs. My candidate has come forward to assert and to maintain the great cause of civil and religious liberty; the cause of free trade; the cause of the poor; the cause of cheap bread; the cause of moderate but progressive reform; at the same time that no one will exceed him in the efforts he is prepared to make for the improvement of this noble and ancient borough. But gentlemen and ladies, my candidate is an utilitarian. He does not seek to gain applause by a little tinsel and gold. He does not condescend to seek to buy your votes by some painting and plastering in a corporation building, when the corporation itself ought, if it did its duty, to beautify the theatre with the large funds which pass through its hands. No; but my friend Captain Macfarlane has heard that you are in want of gas, and he has directed his engineer to make the estimates for the erection of a gasometer. He has heard that you are in want of pure water at your respective houses, and he has also ordered his engineer to sink a well

to the blue earth by boring, to procure the purest water known in the universe, and then to leave you, who desire to be supplied with it, to lay on your pipes to the general reservoir. This is the way in which my friend replies to the false and injurious insinuations which have been thrown out against his generosity and public spirit. But, gentlemen, my client will do more than this: he will liberate the slave; he will vote for putting an end to the poor laws of Elizabeth; he will open your port to the free importation of corn; he will encourage the vote by ballot, that your votes may be free, and that no one may thenceforward be able to ascertain which candidate you may think fit to vote for; and he will seek to improve your principal institutions." (Sir Felix Montague cried, "No interference with our vested interests!" and Sophia followed in his steps and cried, "No interference — no interference!")

Captain Smallman continued: "Your senseless cry of 'No interference' will not be regarded by my candidate: he appeals from you

to the mass of the electors. You are but a small fraction. He comes to emancipate the borough from the faction which governs it, and to extend to all the advantages hitherto only possessed by a few. Rally, then, rally round Captain Macfarlane! Remember the gas!—remember pure water!—remember civil and religious liberty! — remember the slave trade!—the ballot!—and the improvement of your municipal institutions! and rally round the standard here planted of borough freedom, borough prosperity, and borough happiness!"

The ladies all applauded Captain Smallman; but especially Lucy, who said, "Really, he has made a very good speech, and is a very good-looking fellow!"

It was the turn of young Catherwood. He had to second the nomination of Captain Macfarlane; and he did so in a very neat and appropriate speech, which from kindness and courtesy was applauded by all present, Sir Edward Clapperton taking the lead. "You have made a very excellent speech, George," said Sir Edward to him, as he regained his

seat. "You are worthy of being Maria's brother. I wish she had been here to have heard you." George blushed, and was silent.

Scrope (the mayor) then rose, and said, that before taking the votes of the electors, he should call on the candidates, Sir Edward Clapperton and Captain Macfarlane, to make a profession of their principles.

Sir Edward Clapperton then stood forward, and knowing that Lord Swainton's object in enacting this scene was in order that he might hear how his candidate for Warnstable would speak on the *real* day of election, he felt nearly as much trepidation and anxiety as if he had been addressing all the burgesses of that borough. He commenced, however, after the applause with which he had been received had subsided, as follows:—

"Mr. Mayor, and burgesses of Warnstable: You have heard from the noble mover and honourable seconder of my nomination this day, that I am young, wealthy, attached to Church and State, and am very naturally desirous of representing you in Parliament. My

friends, as is usual on such occasions with all parties, have exaggerated my qualifications, and over-estimated my talents." (Cries of "No!—no!" from Lord Swainton and Sir Felix Montague.) "I say, yes!—yes! but I will not stop to discuss this question with my noble and illustrious friends. The question is,—What am I? I reply,—A Tory! Do you know what a Tory means?" (Cries from Captain Smallman and George Catherwood of "Oh, yes, we know,—a robber!") "No, gentlemen, a Tory is not a robber: but he is a constitutional Briton. He does not love a part of the constitution,—a small section of it,—liberty without laws, or laws without liberty. He does not, as the low Whigs and lower Radicals do, speak of the constitution of the country as though it were an unmixed democracy; but he remembers that it consists of King, Lords, and Commons; and that the two former are as necessary to the liberties of the people, as are the latter. A Tory, gentlemen, is one who feels that no Christian country should be without a national church; that

no republican form of government would suit the English character; and that the wealth, rank, and influence of its aristocracy are as essential to its greatness, as are the industry and labour of its democracy. A Tory, gentlemen, is one who loves his King; is prepared to shed his blood in the defence of the throne; who is an advocate for British influence by sea and land, but, above all, by sea; and who is loudest in singing from his heart, 'God save the King,' and 'Rule Britannia!' A Tory, gentlemen, is no lover of change; he is a hater,—and a stout hater, too,—of revolutions; an advocate for peace with honour, but for war rather than disgrace. A Tory, gentlemen, protects the landed interests of the country; is averse to all sudden changes in the corn laws; looks well to the staple and permanent interests of all classes; is a friend to the freedom of the press, but not to its licentiousness; and whilst he is an advocate for religious liberty, he seeks to secure to the Church of England her just and necessary pre-eminence.

"A Tory, gentlemen, looks on the govern-

ment of a country as the head of a country, as he looks on a father as the head of a family. A Tory has no notion of half governments, and half measures, and he is of opinion that when a country is well governed, it will be headed by the government. A Tory supports national schools, not Joseph Lancaster's mongrel, but Dr. Bell's perfect, system of church education. A Tory, when he sees abuses, seeks first to understand their character, and then endeavours to remove them. A Tory does not encourage every new scheme of change and variety, or of what is called reform in our old institutions, but replies to all hasty propositions, 'let us wait, examine, deliberate, investigate, and then decide.' A Tory does not consent to disfranchise boroughs, towns, or cities, because a few individual cases of enormous corruption may be found in two or three, or even a dozen of their electors. A Tory does not let in foreign corn at low duties to ruin the agricultural interests, nor yet exclude it altogether, so as to injure merchants and manufacturers. A Tory does not call for the

emancipation of the slaves without granting adequate compensation to the slave-holders. A Tory is a loyal man,—a patriotic man, and a man attached to the liberties of the country, but not that wild visionary liberty which is not practical in its character, or permanent in its principles; but that regular, orderly, wise, and true liberty which is in harmony with the constitution of these realms.

"On such principles I come forward to ask for your support. I am no friend to a total repeal of the corn laws. I am no friend to the absolute principles of free trade. I am no friend to a chandler-shop system of economy in the management of the affairs of a mighty nation. I am no friend to too great a reduction of the army or navy of the country. I am no friend to the admission of Roman Catholics, Dissenters, or Jews, into Parliament. I am no friend to the abolition of slavery without compensation. I am no friend to revolutions, either at home or abroad. I am no friend to changing or reducing the pension list, whether civil or military. I am no friend

to taxes which press upon the poor; but I am no friend to any tax which unjustly presses exclusively upon the rich. These are my principles, and I ask of you your support and confidence only as far as you approve them.

"With respect to the local wants of this borough,—whether it be a new national school-house you may require, or funds to improve or enlarge your church, or gas-works, water-works, the improvement of your port, the revival of your manufactures, or the embellishment of your public places and public buildings, — I shall always be ready at all times to do all I can to further your interests and consult your wishes. I have already given earnest of my intentions, not by crafty promises, but by *bonâ fide* acts.

"You know, then, my principles. Let my conduct speak for itself. Church and King, Church and State, and prosperity to the borough of Warnstable, are my rallying cries; at the same time that I tender my right hand of fellowship to the Wesleyan Methodists, and to conscientious Dissenters, and assure them

they will find me ever ready to espouse their cause when the rights of conscience shall be attacked, or when their local interests shall require my aid.

"I fear not, gentlemen, the result of this contest. In this ancient and respectable borough truth must prevail. Though I am a stranger amongst you, yet as true Protestant Tory principles are the same everywhere, I do not doubt of my success. It is for you now to do the rest."

"That is admirable," said Lord Swainton, who could no longer restrain his feelings or conceal his satisfaction; "beggars description! —really it does: terse, able, argumentative, impassioned, clear, precise, eloquent, demonstrative, everything. Beggars—beggars—beggars description! Bravo! bravo! bravissimo!"

"How enthusiastic he is," said Charlotte to Sophia, in a whisper.

"And how gentlemanly Sir Felix looks; do look at him," replied Sophia, also in an under tone. Lucy clapped her hands; the Miss Clappertons joined her; and for five

minutes the proceedings were suspended, whilst Sir Edward received the sincere congratulations of all present. The fact was, Sir Edward had made, remade, written, and rewritten the speech he intended to address to the burgesses of Warnstable on arriving there; and here it was cut and dried in due order. He had learnt it by heart. No one knew this but himself. They thought it was extempore; but in all cases it was very good: and Lord Swainton declared it was "superior to any hustings speech he had ever heard in his life, except one from Sheridan, which was so laughable a one, that it threw men, women, and children, into hysterics; so that there were from three to four thousand persons in strong hysterics at the same moment, all crying aloud to him not to proceed any further, or he would be the death of them. Never saw such a scene in my life—never! Beggar'd description!"

There was something so irresistibly absurd in this pretended description of from three to four thousand persons in strong hysterics from the mere effect of an election speech made by

Sheridan, that in spite of the partiality of the Clappertons for his lordship, and of Montague's, Scrope's, and Smallman's wish to please him, the whole party burst out into a long and loud peal of laughter. His lordship looked neither displeased nor disconcerted, but simply added, "For my part, as I expected to see several thousand corpses, I implored Sheridan to desist. Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he! Beggar'd description!"

"I now call on Captain Macfarlane to address the electors," said the mayor; and the captain obeyed the call made upon him in the following terms.

"Mr. Mayor, and worthy burgesses of this old and independent borough. There are two great principles at work in the world;—the one is the principle of good, and the other the principle of evil. This is no new contest—no strife of yesterday; it began in Paradise, and it will terminate only with the dissolution of all things. The principle of good is for freedom, knowledge, wisdom, education, cheap prices, extended suffrage, short parliaments,

the ballot, the abolition of slavery, reform of parliament and corporations, and in one word it is the greatest happiness principle. The principle of evil is corruption, ignorance, slavery, bigoted instruction at merely religious schools, a dear loaf, limited electoral rights, long parliaments, the poll, no reform, and slavery. The former is called Whiggism; the latter is called Toryism, or robberism, which you will. I come forward to support or to represent the good principle, and my honourable opponent is the representative of that principle which added eight hundred millions to our national debt."

"And won the battle of Waterloo," cried Lord Swainton.

"No, no," cried Captain Smallman; "that was won by the Prussians, and not by Wellington."

Captain Macfarlane continued: "It is the fashion, gentlemen, for some of the Whigs of the baser sort, and to whom I do not belong, to compliment the Duke of Wellington as the Hero of Waterloo, but I am not one of the

number. He did not win the battle of Waterloo, and it would not have been won but for the timely arrival of Blucher at the moment of peril. But we will let that pass. The question you have to decide to-day, is not whether Arthur Duke of Wellington did or did not gain the battle of Waterloo, but whether you will allow yourselves, independent burgesses of Warnstable, to be made the dupes, the slaves, the catspaws of a Tory faction. There *must* be reform. There *shall* be reform. There *will* be reform. Had your borough not better, then, yield, acquiesce in the general movement, and seek to obtain the favour of the people against the decisive moment,—than beard the people, offend the people, and drive the people to perhaps the extreme measure of disfranchising the borough?"

(Cries from Sir Felix Montague of "You insult the electors," repeated by Miss Sophia with great energy. "Yes, you insult us, captain!—you insult our borough!" Lucy said nothing, for she rather liked the captain.)

"I do not insult you, worthy burgesses,"

replied the captain; "but I warn you, men and women of Warnstable, of the coming danger. The Tories have resisted too long. The people cry for reform. A mighty movement is preparing, and it is your interest to swim with the stream."

"Like rotten apples," cried Sir Felix.

"Like decayed apples," responded Miss Sophia, who thought the sentiment excellent, but could not make use of the word rotten, even to rotten boroughs, but called them also decayed ones.

"No, not like rotten or decayed apples," replied the captain; "but like wise and experienced navigators or accomplished swimmers. The stream is too strong to resist, and therefore glide with it."

"Even to the rapids, I suppose," cried Sir Felix; and Miss Sophia responded to his observation by saying,

"The rapids are near, and the daylight 's past."

"Yes, the rapids *are* near," exclaimed Captain Macfarlane, "and I caution you against them. But the rapids here, are the mighty and

irresistible torrent set in against you, and which will sweep all before you, unless you yield.

"Burgesses of the borough of Warnstable; I come amongst you to assert great principles, —to advocate a mighty cause;—to plead for civil and religious liberty all the world over. You know what the Whigs are."

Cries from Lord Swainton of, "We do indeed: the slaves of the strong, and the tyrants of the weak."

"Yes," responded Miss Charlotte, hardly knowing exactly what she meant, "slaves and tyrants at the same time."

"No, gentlemen," continued Captain Macfarlane, "the protectors of the weak, and the restrainers of tyrants."

"Say their retainers," ejaculated Montague; and Miss Sophia was good enough to repeat, "Say retainers." She would perhaps have been puzzled if asked what she meant.

"Mr. Mayor, I appeal to you, sir, to maintain order," cried the captain; and Scrope called "Order! order!"

"Order yourself, and see how you 'd like

it," said Lord Swainton; and Miss Charlotte laughed heartily at his lordship's wit.

Captain Macfarlane.—"I have only two words to add. The Tories will soon be out: the Whigs will soon be in. Do you understand that, men of Warnstable? Will you court the rising or the setting sun? Grant that the Tories have done some little good to this place, can they continue to do so? Have they not nearly run their race? Has not 'the Duke' declared that the present constitution of Parliament is the most perfect system of human wisdom that can be imagined? —And do not the people call for reform?"

"No, not the people, but the populace," said Sir Felix; and Sophia repeated, "The populace! the populace!"

Captain Macfarlane.—"Gentlemen, I have done. The past has belonged to our adversaries; the present is the moment of dispute; but the future is ours. I leave my cause in your hands."

Lucy was very warm in her praises, the Miss Clappertons applauded considerably, and

Lord Swainton assured the captain that a better speech he had never heard from a Whig candidate.

The mayor (Scrope) then called on all the parties to a show of hands. Lord Swainton, Sir Felix Montague, Miss Lucy, and Miss Charlotte, voted for Sir Edward; and Miss Sophia, from politeness, Captain Smallman, and Mr. Catherwood, for Captain Macfarlane. Scrope declared that Sir Edward was duly elected; and for form's sake, and to keep up the joke to the last, Captain Macfarlane's friends demanded a poll.

Sir Edward Clapperton then came forward and returned thanks:—"In vain," said he, "shall my opponent proceed to a poll. The majority of to-day shall be ten times greater to-morrow. Let this Whig candidate write to his friends, that the show of hands was against him, but that he hopes by bribes, by threats of reform and dissolution of Parliament, and by an appeal to the passions of the lower orders, to defeat your return. But his hopes will be defeated. You will

abide by your decision. I know you will. But be firm: be early to-morrow at the poll: bring up the old, the sick, all, all who can come, and complete that triumph which you have begun to-day, — the triumph of King, Lords, and Commons, the Church, the State, and the Laws, over democracy, revolution, and anarchy."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Lord Swainton. "I would not give two-pence halfpenny for the captain's chance. Come, captain, now for your speech."

Captain Macfarlane: — "'A faint heart never won a fair lady!'" ("Ha! ha! ha!" laughed all the ladies, who felt they were all fair, and all had to be won.) "And a chap-fallen candidate can never, and ought never, to win an election at Warnstable! We have had the odds against us, — but what signifies that? When the polling shall begin, we will show these proud, aristocratic Tories that we have the real, and that they have only a sham, majority. To work, then, my friends!—rouse your slumberers!—cheer on your enthusiastic!

— and let us bury, in a deep ditch, or a deeper grave, this faction which would dominate over the rights and freedom of mankind!"

"Capital!" cried Lucy. "Excellent!" said Charlotte. But Sophia was silent. All her praises were reserved for Sir Felix, whose every gesture confirmed her in her opinion, that he was the most finished gentleman of them all.

Sir Edward Clapperton then rose and moved the best thanks of the meeting to the mayor (Scrope) for his able and impartial conduct; which resolution was seconded by Captain Macfarlane, put to the meeting by Captain Smallman, and carried unanimously.

Scrope said, "Thank you, all, — very much obliged to you;" and declared the meeting terminated.

"The best meeting for wit, talent, humour, fun, I ever was present at during my life," said Lord Swainton: "and as to the electresses, or lady burgesses, they have kept the meeting alive by their admirable repartees, invigorating plaudits, surprising knowledge of

electioneering matters, and adaptation of all they said, looked, and did, to everything going on, at the very precise moment of time when all should have been said, looked, and done. Beggars description!"

"I am fearful you are fatigued," said Sir Felix, as he approached Sophia. "Such scenes are calculated to excite your sensibilities too much. You evidently feel most strongly, and if I were your brother, I should, as much as possible, keep you from all unnecessary excitement, — you are clearly most sensitive."

Sophia looked down, blushed deeply, owned "she did feel rather strongly;" — and Lucy said, "not rather, Sophia, but very much so."

Sir Felix was smitten both ways: with Sophia's personal charms, and with her golden attractions; but the moment for such a declaration had not yet arrived; and he confined his attack to well-measured compliments, which at once charmed the fair one by their novelty, and impressed her by their frequency. Sir Felix felt that as far as Sophia was concerned,

he had only to "pop the question;" but then what would Sir Edward say?

Lord Swainton had heard, during the course of the election contest, in the splendid dining-room at Milsom Street, one phrase from Sir Edward Clapperton that somewhat disconcerted him. It was that when he said to young Catherwood, "You are worthy of being Maria's brother. I wish she had been here to have heard you."

"And so you have a sister?" said his lordship to young Catherwood, after the sham election contest scene was over, and whilst the party was engaged in discussing the merits of some mulligatawny and ox-tail soups, prepared for luncheon.—"And a sister Maria, too? Charming name!—Young, handsome, lovely, fair, good-tempered, no doubt."

"Indeed she is, my lord," replied young Catherwood. "I wish she had been here, too, for she would have laughed heartily at your lordship's very amusing speech."

"Oh, you're very good, very polite," said his lordship. "Your sister Maria is young

then, — quite a child, — a nice little darling dear?"

"She is a nice little darling dear, indeed!" replied her brother; "but she is more than a year older than myself: I am nineteen, and she is a little more than twenty."

"Bless my stars!" cried his lordship. "Is she, indeed?" He asked no more questions, but said to himself, "We'll see what chance Miss Maria Catherwood has against Lady Arabella Swainton. Beggars description!"

That day and the next were devoted to every species of fun, mirth, and amusement which is in any way compatible with the external forms of professed mourning for the loss of a rich relative. Charades, recitations of poetry, music, singing, love-making, in fact everything the most agreeable in the world, were acted or performed in rapid succession; to each and all of which Lord Swainton most truly declared that it "beggar'd description!" Two happier days were never spent in Milsom Street by any human beings; and it was with great reluctance that, on the morning of the

third, preparations were made for the departure to Warnstable.

Lord Swainton kissed the hand of Miss Charlotte, and Captain Macfarlane the hand of Miss Lucy; but Sir Felix Montague pressed the hand of dear Sophia more sensitively, and heaved a deep sigh. At length the carriages drove off; and the ladies were all most eloquent in the praises of their departed guests; but Miss Sophia would insist on one point, and that was "that Sir Felix was the most finished gentleman of the party." Upon this point some warm discussion took place, but the little rivalry between them was soon over, and all agreed to eulogize my lord, Sir Felix, and the captain.

CHAPTER VI.

Bareheaded, popularly low he bow'd,
And paid the salutations of the crowd.

YOUNG.

From the new world her silver and her gold
Came, like a tempest, to confound the old;
Feeding with these the bribed elector's hopes,
Alone she gave us emperors and popes.

WALLER.

Their feet through faithless leather meet the dirt,
And oftener changed their principles than shirt.

YOUNG.

THE Chiltern Hundreds were granted to Sir Oscar Morbleu, and a new writ was moved for the borough of Warnstable on the first day of the session. According to previous arrangements, a special courier was despatched with the intelligence from the neighbourhood of the House of Commons the moment the motion had been made, and he arrived at S—— M——

about one hour subsequent to that of Sir Edward Clapperton and his friends. The courier had performed the journey in twenty hours. He had left London at five in the afternoon of the previous day, and it was now one in the afternoon of the next. The innkeeper had been previously apprized of the intended arrival of a party of gentlemen, since Sir Edward had written to the very same hotelkeeper where Lord Swainton and Captain Smallman had partaken of their Christmas dinner. The landlord perceived with pleasure the return of two of his former friends, especially as they were accompanied by five others, in addition to two men-servants of Sir Edward, and the Italian courier of Lord Swainton.

"What a consumption of coals," said his lordship, as he paced to and fro the passage of the inn. "Seven fires all blazing in seven bed-rooms; a fire to roast an ox in the dining-room; its counterpart in the drawing-room; in the kitchen a furnace—not a fire but a furnace; we are living in a hot-house, though without the thermometer is at freezing point. Beats

Vesuvius hollow! Hecla a fool to it! Etna hides its diminished head! We shall be roasted in one room, broiled in a second, stewed in a third, boiled in a fourth, fried in a fifth, baked in a sixth, and steamed in a seventh; the collieries will be exhausted, coals will rise, cinders will be a drug in the market, and we shall all be reduced to ashes! Mr. Catherwood, why is this fender like Westminster Abbey? Because it receives the ashes of the grate! Beggars description! Ha! ha! ha!"

Scarcely had the luggage been conveyed to each separate room, and their various inmates arranged their toilette for a substantial breakfast, than a loud cracking of the whip was heard from without. It was the courier from London.

"I did not expect you before three or four o'clock," said his lordship, "and scarcely before five. I know your road—I see you riding—quick 's the word, and sharp 's the motion: Knightsbridge, Hammersmith, Turnham Green, Brentford, Hounslow, Staines, Bagshot, Hartford Bridge, Basingstoke, Overton, Whit-

church, Andover, Salisbury, Blandford, Dorchester, and Traveller's Rest: — there I suppose you breakfasted this morning,—cold fowl, ham, madeira, coffee, brandy, and off."

"I certainly did breakfast there, my lord," replied the courier, "for that is an old custom, but my cold fowl, ham, madeira, and coffee, were simply some hot toast and tea; though I think your lordship's bill of fare a great improvement."

"So do I," said his lordship; "and mind, landlord, he has the best dinner your town or inn can afford!" and then turning to the courier he added, "Well, you left the Traveller's Rest at seven?"

"Half-past, my lord."

"And then dashed on to Bridport, Axminster, Honiton, Exeter, Crediton, Chumleigh, and here."

This was much the longest road, but half-a-dozen outvoters of Warnstable lived at Salisbury, Dorchester, and Exeter, and the intelligence of the resignation of Sir Oscar Morbleu, and the moving for the new writ were thus

communicated to them thirty-six hours before they would otherwise have known it; as Sir Felix Montague had prepared letters to them before he quitted London, and which the courier left on his passage through those cities.

"You left the letters?" said Sir Felix.

"Oh yes, my lord," replied the courier, "and they all desired to be remembered to your lordship."

"We are armed at all points," exclaimed Lord Swainton in an agony of joy; "now come who will,—come who may,—we are a-head of them. Morbleu has the Chiltern Hundreds,—a new writ has been moved for. Sam Pocock must be sent for. Chaise and pair out immediately," cried his lordship to the innkeeper, "and a good pair too — for Warnstable. One of your servants, Sir Edward, had better be the bearer of despatches. We will all pass the day here; get the address of Sir Oscar printed; your address too; have them circulated to-morrow morning, or to-night; and make a public entry to-morrow afternoon."

To the no small discomfiture of Sir Ed-

ward's valet, who was fatigued and benumbed with his night's travelling on the rumble, with a thermometer at several degrees below zero, he was ordered to breakfast quickly, and proceed to Warnstable with despatches. They simply announced to Sam Pocock that the writ had been moved for, and that the candidate and his friends, together with Lord Swainton, were at S—— M——.

In less than three hours Sam Pocock arrived. Lord Swainton gave him a private audience, — placed in his hands 1000*l.*, informed him that when that was gone, he had 500*l.* more at his disposal, but recommended economy, as it was by no means impossible that before six months would be over their heads there would be another election. "The King's health is declining fast," said his lordship; "some say he has not six weeks—others, not six months to live. At any rate he cannot live long, and then comes a dissolution. Besides this, affairs look worse and worse in France, and a popular movement there, will lead to a disturbance here; so we must take

care of our man, spend as little as we can, and keep up his spirits for another time."

"All that 's very just as you say, no doubt, my lord," replied Pocock: "but then, you see, that 's neither here nor there, as the saying is. A thousand pounds won't do; not a ha'penny less than 1500*l.* will bring him in; and to do the trick with 1500*l.* all must pull well. I did think of 1200*l.* but 1500*l.* is absolutely necessary,—and no opposition neither. Prices are rising, my lord: wotes are dearer than ever. You can't get our electors to listen to any o' your arguments, notwithstanding I can't say nothing against none of them. All they say is, 'Let 's finger the stuff!' and till then all 's my eye, my lord. Now it 's in my hands, that 's all right, and I 'll take your lordship's word for the rest; but before the election, I must have 500*l.* more if there be no other candidate; and if there be another, 1000*l.* more."

"Oh, there will be no other candidate," said his lordship. "And as to all money matters, never fear; but let not a word be said to any one but myself on these affairs. Never open

your lips, you rogue, to Sir Edward Clapperton, the candidate, on this subject; for he has the utmost horror of all money transactions, and would rather give up the candidateship altogether than exchange a single word about expenses."

Sam promised not to offend in this particular, and his lordship then introduced him to Sir Edward Clapperton.

"Sir Edward, I have the satisfaction to present to you my worthy friend, and faithful, intelligent, influential agent, Mr. Samuel Pocock, of Warnstable, well known all round the country as the enlightened and zealous advocate and warmest admirer of true Church and King principles. A more honest, high-principled, good-hearted fellow than Sam, does not exist in his Majesty's dominions. Beggars description!"

"Your servant, sir," said Sam.

"I have often heard of you, Mr. Pocock," said Sir Edward, "and I am delighted to make your acquaintance. I am sure his lordship could not say too much in your praise;

and, allow me to add, I rely entirely on you, and on your zeal, talent, and influence."

"We'll do what we can," said Sam, brushing round his beaver with the sleeve of his coat. "I'm in great hopes we shan't have no opposition; and, in that case, it will be a very snug and agreeable affair. When do you propose to enter the town?"

"Oh, on that, and all other points, we wish to consult you," said Lord Swainton: "you are to be our guide, our compass, our polar star, our sun, our moon, our everything! Nothing without Sam."

Sam felt flattered by this language, and advised that the entry should not be made until the next day, or the day after; but, suddenly remembering that it was no joke to lose for one day at his own inn the board and lodging of seven gentlemen and three servants, he added, after a moment's pause, "upon the whole, Sir Edward, I advise that the entry should take place to-morrow afternoon, in time for the procession to be over by dusk."

"What arrangements do you propose mak-

ing as to the procession?" asked Sir Edward.

"Leave all that to me, Sir Edward," replied Sam. "It shall be a splendid affair: don't fear. What are your colours?"

"White and green," said Sir Edward; "and we have brought a splendid flag, worked by my sisters, with the words, 'Clapperton for ever, and Prosperity to the Borough of Warnstable!'"

"Nothing can be better than that," said Sam; "and I will get some painted or printed this evening with 'Clapperton, the Poor Man's Friend!' You must come in, Sir Edward, not only as a Tory, but as a friend to the poor, and obtain the votes of all parties. The theatre affair has made you a vast many friends; but the Dissenters and Methodists are not pleased with it; so I advise you to send a few five pound notes to all their schools, bible societies, and lying-in associations, and I know not what else, there's so many of them. This will do you a great deal of good with them; and thus you will manage to have all parties for you."

"That 's an excellent notion of yours, Sam," said Lord Swainton. "My friend, Sir Edward, at any other time would hesitate before he subscribed to dissenting schools and methodist societies; but all 's fair game at election times. Besides which, the Wesleyan Methodists have now arrived at such a degree of strength in point of numbers in the country, that they can no longer be overlooked. They will very soon be able to command elections in the north of England; and, for aught I know to the contrary, may have some influence at Warnstable. As to Dissenters generally, they are Whigs or Radicals; but I think the majority are Radicals, or Radical-reformers: whereas the Wesleyans are Tories, and never side with the Radical party. We must not forget them, Sam, in the approaching distribution of good things, for they may exercise a very beneficial influence in favour of Sir Edward in the event of a contest. But talking of clubs and associations, have you any Freemasons at Warnstable?"

"Oh yes, my lord," replied Mr. Pocock;

"we have a very large lodge; and also a society of Odd Fellows."

"I am a Mason," said his lordship; "but not an Odd Fellow."

"It's high time you *were* then," said Sir Felix; "for never could the society have presented to it one more eligible."

"Are the Odd Fellows poor?" asked Captain Smallman.

"Very poor indeed," replied Mr. Pocock.

"In this respect, at any rate, they are unlike your lordship," said Sir Edward.

Scrope laughed in his sleeve — Sir Felix peeped out of window—Smallman looked grave — and Lord Swainton replied,—

"Odd Fellows! poor fellows! good fellows! merry fellows! full of fun, life, antics, odd tricks, odd sayings, odd doings! Odd Fellows! no hum-drums — no old plodders — no toilers in the same oft-beaten track! lovers of originalities, queer thoughts, strange notions, extraordinary opinions; and all that sort of thing. Beggars description! Must see the Odd Fellows! Subscribe to the Odd Fellows! Toast

the Odd Fellows! Give some bowls of punch to the Odd Fellows! What an odd fellow a Tory candidate is at an election! He pleads for Church and King, gives to dissenting and methodist societies; and drinks, shakes hands, and jokes with Odd Fellows! Nothing like elections to make us all brethren!"

"The Whigs and Radicals are quite as extraordinary," said Sir Felix Montague. "They cry for Church reform, and yet seek the support of the clergy; declare that they wish to have nothing to do with religious matters or opinions, and yet, whilst canvassing, attend at dissenting meeting-houses and methodist chapels; and are present one night at a ball, the next preside at a bible meeting, the third patronize the theatre, and the fourth take the chair at a missionary meeting."

"Does not this prove that the Dissenters and Methodists are rising sects?" asked Captain Smallman; "and does it not demonstrate that the Church has less influence than it used to have, and even that she is in danger?"

"Oh, the old cry of 'the Church is in danger,' will never be believed again," said Lord Swainton. "It is the story of the wolf. The Church has said so often that she was in danger, and then it turned out that there was no danger at all, that there must be *real* danger indeed before that cry will be listened to again. The Church is too strongly rooted in the belief, prejudices, and affections of the people of this country ever to be in real danger. Take away all her endowments — all her tithes, both great and small — all her glebes — all her church-rates — all her fees — and, in one word, all her revenues, and she would not be less still the Church of the people. Overthrow her altars, destroy her pulpits, tear up her pews, burn the surplices of her clergy, melt down the bells and the communion plate, and declare by some Act of Parliament that there is no longer a state religion, and you would see her coffers filled by the voluntary contributions of the poor, her abolished tithes, endowments, church-rates, and fees more than compensated for by the donations, subscriptions, and collections of

her sons and daughters; her altars would be erected in each man's heart; the church would be crowded to hear the preachers preach, if necessary, as in olden times, from the altars; the best plate would be brought from rich men's houses, and bread from the poor man's loaf; for the people of this country know, love, and will have for themselves a *national* religion."

This conversation would probably have lasted much longer, but that Sam Pocock begged to be allowed to start, and requested that some one would go with him to correct the proofs of the two addresses to be printed, and to assist him in drawing up posting-bills, hand-bills, &c. &c., and in writing some short notes of invitation to a breakfast to-morrow at his hotel. Captain Smallman, who had conducted with so much success the affair of beautifying the theatre, offered his services, and they were at once accepted.

The moment the addresses of Sir Oscar Morbleu and of Sir Edward Clapperton were placed in the hands of the printers at Warn-

stable, one being sent to one, and the other to the other printer, it was, of course, impossible to keep the intelligence a secret; and every one who heard it was most agreeably astonished. So well had the secret been kept by all parties, and especially by Sir Oscar Morbleu and Sam Pocock, that not the least idea of the resignation of the former had been entertained by any one in the borough; all believing that the new candidate of whom they had heard, from London, was preparing his way against a *general* election should take place, either in consequence of the death of the King, or of events which were expected to take place in France, at least six months before the revolution really occurred. A deputation from the corporation proceeded to Sir Oscar's at the early hour of eight the next morning to learn whether it could be a hoax; but Sir Oscar had gone to London, and Lady Morbleu simply assured the gentlemen that it was perfectly true: that Sir Oscar had obtained a government appointment; that Warnstable was too dear a place for him any longer

to represent; that Sir Oscar hoped to get into Parliament for a cheap government borough; and that she knew Sir Edward Clapperton had the best wishes of Sir Oscar for his success. "Indeed," she added, "should there be any opposition to Sir Edward, I am to inform Sir Oscar, and he will come down and use his best exertions and influence to ensure him success."

The deputation returned to Warnstable; the addresses of Sir Oscar Morbleu and of Sir Edward Clapperton were by that time in circulation: the corporation declared itself at once in favour of the new candidate; the flags, banners, cockades, music, were all prepared in a few hours; and at one o'clock in the day it set out to meet Sir Edward. The Clapperton colours were much admired. A bright green and a beautiful white looked cheerful and pretty; nothing could be more so. Large flags were flying, with the words printed, "Clapperton, the Poor Man's Friend," and "Clapperton, and Prosperity to the Borough of Warnstable." The morning was

frosty, but splendid. Sam Pocock understood admirably all election manœuvres.—There was the "bundle of sticks," the prettiest sticks in the world, white as snow, and tied round with white and green satin ribands: this was to denote the union of all parties in his favour. Then there was a printed placard, in green letters on a white board, "A Cheap Loaf, and Clapperton for ever;" and on another, "Clapperton and all interests." One man carried a huge loaf ornamented with the Clapperton cockades; another, a large folio bible, with the words written beneath it on a sheet of paper, "I wish every child to be able to read the bible." The charity-children, to whom Sir Edward had sent favours and cakes, were dressed in their best, wearing his colours in their coats and frocks. Frozen-out gardeners and fishermen, to whom he had also sent relief, carried baskets of frozen vegetables, frozen fish, nets, and implements of garden husbandry, all likewise bedecked with Sir Edward's ribands. At length, the procession set forth as far as L——, to meet Sir Edward.

The corporation took the lead, preceded by constables, halberdmen, and a band of music. Deputations from different branches of trades and industry followed. Then there was a Freemason's committee or deputation, in grand costume. Then the Odd Fellows. Then fishermen and frozen-out gardeners. Then more music, colours, standards, the bundle of sticks; and then some hundreds of charity and of sunday-school children. Towards the close came a very large piece of beef, stuck at the end of one pole, and a prodigious loaf on another. Underneath the beef was printed on a placard, "Clapperton and Plenty," and underneath the loaf "Clapperton and a Cheap Loaf." On another board was stuck a printed paper, with the words, "Who beautified the Theatre? Clapperton." And then as a set-off to this theatrical placard, and in order to gratify those who were not attached to such amusements as those afforded by the theatre, there was another "Clapperton, the friend of Bible Societies and of Education." Most of these placards had been previously drawn up by Lord Swainton,

and were placed by him in the hands of Mr. Pocock at S—— M——; but others were the offspring of the fertile imagination and truly electioneering head of Sam himself.

Sir Edward, Lord Swainton, and Sir Felix Montague set off from S—— M—— in the new family carriage, open, with six horses decorated with his favours, and with two servants also profusely adorned with white and green; and the post chariot followed with Scrope, Macfarlane, and young Catherwood, and the Italian courier in the rumble, drawn by four horses. A large bag of halfpence to be thrown among the poor, and a little bag of sixpences for the charity children, were placed in the first carriage; and away they rattled through S—— A——, F——, S——, and L——.

At L—— the carriages stopped; the head of the procession was to be seen in the distance; and Sam Pocock, white and green from top to bottom, arrived at full gallop on a white rosinante decorated also most gaily.

"Happy to see you, Sir Edward, so near Warnstable," said Sam; "you may expect a

warm reception. Your address is highly approved; and I should not be surprised if you walked over the course, as the saying is. But we must not halloo before we are out of the wood."

"No, no," said Lord Swainton, "never fear!—prudence—activity—zeal—discretion—not too much confidence, but firmness and courage. These are the words we must all remember, and all will be well."

"Will you advance, gentlemen, at a walking pace," said Sam, "and you will meet the procession in a few minutes. Long live Clapperton! Clapperton for ever!" shouted Sam, and away he galloped back to meet the worthy burgesses and inhabitants of Warnstable.

Sir Edward began to quake. He felt that it was one thing to talk to his sisters from chairs placed on mahogany tables, and another to oratorize to a mob in the open air. He forgot all about his speeches; he could not have repeated a word if he had been asked to do so. He had prepared one in his mind,

during the previous night, against his arrival at Warnstable; but it had melted, as the snow had done, from a warmer influence.

"I don't know what I shall say, my lord," said Sir Edward; "all my previous preparations are now useless. I cannot remember one word of all I intended to utter. What am I to do?"

"Trust to the inspiration of the moment," replied his lordship; "besides the procession will excite and animate you. You will not be expected to do more than bow to the men and kiss your hands to the ladies, until you reach the hotel; and then say a few strong, short, and sharp words, the less the better, but as strong as vitriol, as short as pie-crust, and as sharp as verjuice."

"I am in a most particular, pretty considerable, regular fix," said Sir Edward; "and must trust to my stars, for I have no idea at this moment what I shall say."

The procession now arrived.

"Welcome to Warnstable, Sir Edward!", said the mayor. "Your fame has arrived be-

fore you. Your good works have praised you in our gates."

"I am most happy to see you, sir," replied Sir Edward; "and I trust that when you know me more you will think as kindly of me."

"Clapperton for ever!" shouted the whole procession.

"It's always *for ever*," said Lord Swainton: "these same fellows, with the same poles, holding similar placards, loaves, beef, bundle of sticks, and all, have in the course of their fifty or forty years' lives cried 'for ever!' to at least twice times twelve different candidates: Whigs, Tories, Radicals; corn-law makers, corn-law haters; free-trade vindicators, free-trade opposers; slavery abolitionists, slavery apologists; reform candidates, and haters of reform; advocates for the ballot, and advocates for polling; defenders of the Church, and her stoutest foes; lovers of rotten boroughs, and radical uprooters of the whole of the present electoral system; all have been received with shouts of 'for ever!' But what matters that? They have been elected, sat in

the House of Commons, voted with the ministers or against them, had their day of popularity, spent their money, brought new wealth to the borough, thrown out their tub to the whale as others did before them; and then, at the next dissolution, have made way for some other 'for ever' man, who in his turn met the same procession, professed other principles, and yet received the same applause, and so on, and so on, for ever and ever. Amen! Beggars description!"

"'For ever and ever, amen!' I doubt very much indeed," replied Sir Felix Montague; "for, if I do not mistake, a feeling of dissatisfaction at this electoral system is getting up in England, which will sweep away many of these boroughs, and introduce a wholly new order of electoral operation. But we have not time to discuss this now, for we are reaching Warnstable."

"Clapperton for ever!" shouted a little old man on two crutches, as they arrived at the entrance of the borough, and Sir Edward flung him half-a-crown.

"Clapperton for ever!" shrieked half-a-dozen old women, whose mean attire bespoke poverty and woe, and Sir Edward gave them half-a-crown each.

At this moment there was a rush of the young, hale, and hearty to both carriages: they were the two legged horses, for the four legged ones were here taken out of the carriage, and Sir Edward and his friends were drawn into the town. At this point also Captain Smallman, who had been very active with the "Committee," joined the procession, and took the fourth seat in Sir Edward's carriage.

The reception of Sir Edward was splendid. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs; the bells rung their merriest peals; his cockades were seen everywhere. There seemed to be white and green enough to cover the earth, or at least to take its measure. Sir Edward looked remarkably well. The old women of the people cried out, "Bless your pretty face!" The younger women said, "Oh, how handsome he is!" and several came close up to

the carriage tittering, and exclaiming, "What a pretty boy!" Sir Edward was in excellent spirits, waved his hat, laughed, shouted, kissed his hands, and arrived at the hotel.

"Courage!" said Lord Swainton; "you see that bow window," pointing to the first floor: "you must address this mass of people from that very spot. Courage! Sharp, short, and strong."

Sir Edward in two minutes made his appearance at the window in question. He was greeted with unusual applause. He had evidently made a favourable impression upon all parties. He was young, good looking, full of spirits, and distributed his silver along the road, not with ostentation, but with liberality. At length the applauses ceased, and he spoke as follows:—

"Here I am at Warnstable! and it will take much time, much money, much energy, and much effort to drive me from it. You have a glorious town here, a noble port, beautiful girls, handsome women, fine men, and a seat in Parliament to give away to the man of

your choice. Shall I be that man? And will your choice fall upon me?"

"It shall,"—"it will,"—"yes,"—"yes," cried men, women, and children, and Sir Edward proceeded.

"But I don't belong to your county."

"Never mind that," said the men.

"I 'm a stranger amongst you."

"You won't be so long," cried the women.

"I 'm young, and without experience."

"So much the better," shouted the girls.

"Well, then, I see I am a bit of a favourite."

"Indeed you are," cried the girls again. "Never fear, you shall come in."

"But I 'm a Tory," said Sir Edward.

"So much the better," cried some members of the corporation and the better sort of people.

"I 'm a Churchman."

"Better again," cried the same parties.

"But I am a friend to civil and religious liberty, and to the rights of conscience."

"Very good, indeed, friend," said a quaint

looking middle-aged Quaker, with an amazing broad brimmed hat on his head.

"I am an enemy to Popery."

"Hang the Pope!" shouted drunken Tom, who was one of the wits of the town.

"I am a friend to a moderate duty on foreign corn, so as to protect all classes."

"Bravo! young fellow," cried a knot of old farmers who stood together, resolved to ask him some questions on this point in case he should be silent.

"I am an enemy to the slave trade and to slavery, but a friend to compensation."

"Excellent, indeed," exclaimed a dissenting minister.

"This is what I am. Have you any questions to put to me? If you have I am here to answer them."

"Yes," cried drunken Tom; "do you like punch?"

"Very much, indeed," replied Sir Edward; "but not to excess."

"Good," said Tom; "but what is excess?"

"When it makes a clever fellow look silly."

"Good again," said Tom; "but who 's the silly one here?"

"Not myself, I hope," replied Sir Edward. And then there was a general laugh, in which Tom joined with all his heart.

"You 'll do," cried Tom.

"I am glad you think so," replied Sir Edward, and again the mob laughed heartily,

"I wish to ask you a few questions, Sir Edward," said a very little man, in a suit of plain attire, and with a very sharp, shrill voice, who was a draper.

"With all my heart," replied Sir Edward.

"Are you the son of my old friend, Sir Edward Clapperton, of Clapham, late Alderman of London?"

"I have that honour and happiness," replied Sir Edward.

"When I knew him," said the draper, "he was no Tory; how is it you are one?"

"Ah!" said Tom, "that 's a good un; now answer that."

"If I recollect right," replied Sir Edward, "your father was a lawyer, sir."

"Yes he was," said the draper.

"And yet you, I believe, are a draper?"

"Yes, I am," replied the little man.

"Allow me then to ask why you should be a draper, when your father was a lawyer?"

"That 's a good un, indeed," said Tom; "this is rare fun."

"I don't think there 's any resemblance in the two cases," said the little man; "but if you will have my reason, I will tell you. I did not like the profession of a lawyer, and I do like the trade of a draper.

"That 's capital," cried Tom. "Bravo!—at it again."

"And my father was of no political party at all," said Sir Edward; "and I did not like to be of no party—and did like to become a Tory; and so here I am, and always at your service."

This was the signal for renewed shouts of laughter, in which drunken Tom took the lead.

"I 've not done with you yet," said the draper.

"I 'm glad of it," replied Sir Edward; "I

should be sorry if you gave up so soon the son of your old friend, my father, the city alderman."

"Why did you not become Whig or Radical? and why did you become a Tory?" asked the draper.

"Allow me to ask you one question," replied Sir Edward. "I think, if my memory does not deceive me, your father was a High Churchman: how comes it to pass that you are now a Baptist Dissenter? Why did you not turn Independent, or Wesleyan, or Low Churchman, and not Baptist?"

"Because I approved of Baptist principles," said the draper.

"Thank you," replied Sir Edward; "and I became a Tory because I approved of Tory principles."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried all present; and drunken Tom said, "That's a smart lad! He'll do, if he drinks some punch."

"Are there any more questioners?" asked Sir Edward.

"Yes, one more," said Tom, "and that's

all. Do you mean to stand treat to-night and give us something to drink?"

"Toast and water in abundance," replied Sir Edward. "I hope the beverage will be agreeable."

Tom laughed aloud and said, "Then I'll treat myself, and drink your health at my own expense."

"You shan't do that either," replied Sir Edward, and he threw him a sovereign.

How Tom did dance, halloo, and roar; but on Sir Edward requesting silence, Tom said not another word.

"I believe then I have answered all your inquiries; and now I will take my leave of you for the night. May your beds be soft, your pillows easy, and your dreams delightful!"

The mob shouted; Tom sung his gratitude in some impromptu phrases, which meant nothing more than this: that he was resolved to drink every drop of that sovereign in punch, and every glass to the name of Sir Edward Cl—a—p—perton.

"Nothing could be better, my dear Sir

Edward," said Lord Swainton; "if you had studied your speech from the time of the deluge downwards, repeating it six times per diem, and had had for your instructors all the sages, wits, statesmen, and philosophers of all ages to assist you in its preparation, their joint efforts would have been a failure when compared to this."

"I am glad to see the son of my old friend," said Mr. Smith the draper, as he entered the room. "I hope I did not offend you by my questions."

"On the contrary," replied Sir Edward; "they gave life to the scene; and I hope I may reckon on your support."

"Decidedly," said the draper; "and I trust I may rely on your assistance."

"In what?" asked Sir Edward.

"In my business," replied the draper.

"But you are a Radical," said Sir Edward; "and no Radical would ask, I thought, for support from a candidate."

"You are mistaken," said the draper; "it's one thing to be an elector, and another thing to

be a draper. I don't ask you to support or aid me because I am an *elector*, but only because I am a *draper*."

"That's excellent," replied Sir Edward; "and so I will."

"Rogues all!" muttered Captain Macfarlane; "Whigs, Tories, and Radicals — all rogues in their turn."

The dinner-table was laid for thirty; and the principal men of the place dined with Sir Edward and his friends. The usual toasts, sentiments, wine, and punch, were given and drank; and Sir Edward kept up his reputation for being a good speaker by several short, sententious, and clever addresses. Lord Swainton contributed to the amusement of the meeting by his oddities and peculiarities; and it was some time after midnight before Sir Edward Clapperton gained his quiet bed-room, and reflected on the bustling and stirring incidents of the day. On the whole, they had been most gratifying; and he wrote two lines to Milsom Street to say so. His sleep was sound; his dreams were all decorated with green and

white; and when he woke in the morning, the first words he heard were from some urchins who were crying in the streets "Clapperton for ever!"

The next three days were devoted by Sir Edward to canvassing the borough. Some promised him their votes unequivocally; others conditionally, *i. e.* provided no one came forward whose claims on them appeared more deserving of attention; whilst a dozen reserved themselves altogether until the moment should arrive when the nomination should take place. On the whole, the canvass was exceedingly favourable; but Sir Edward perceived that in the event of a contest, the highest bidder would be the purchaser; and that though he was young, handsome, and wealthy, if an old, ugly, but wealthier man came, who would spend more in bribery and corruption, though he should even be a Radical, his election would be next to certain. He communicated these convictions to Lord Swainton.

"And yet there is no cure for this state of

things," said his lordship. "Reform by Act of Parliament as much as you will, pass statute after statute, and measure after measure, as long as the people are corrupt, neither universal suffrage, nor annual Parliaments, nor the vote by ballot, nor anything else, will put a stop to bribery. When men will not be bribed, there will be no bribers!"

The hotel was crowded with eaters and drinkers from morning till night. Early breakfasts, late breakfasts; early luncheons, late luncheons; early dinners, late dinners; early teas, late teas; early suppers, late suppers; and punch and spirits and water till one or two in the morning, beginning again with early breakfasts at eight the next day, delighted Sam Pocock, and enchanted the free and independent burgesses.

Sir Edward was the gayest of the gay; courted the old ladies, kissed the young ones; talked politics, trade, and commerce to the old men, and racing, hunting, shooting, fishing, to the young men; won all hearts, and gained

all praises, and now only waited for the day of nomination. The next day was Sunday. He went twice to church, and in the evening to the Wesleyan chapel. He visited the Sunday schools, promised rewards to the children, gave proofs of his munificence, invited all the teachers of all the schools to breakfast with him the next morning, and the next day took the chair at a friendly society anniversary in the afternoon, went to the theatre at night, and at last, after many false alarms of another candidate being about to appear, some declaring he was a Whig, others a Tory, and others a Radical, had the satisfaction to see the day of nomination arrive without any competitor.

"Not a candidate but yourself," said his lordship, as he ascended with Sir Edward the steps of the Town-hall. "Fortunate man! happy candidate! brilliant success! glorious triumph! What a pity you have no beautiful wife, no lovely partner of your joys to whom to write off one line and inform her of your victory. You must allow *me* to be your

secretary to the ladies. I will write to them from the hustings, and you shall frank the letter."

The scene at the Borough-hall was short and simple. Two of the wealthiest and most respectable merchants of Warnstable moved and seconded the nomination of Sir Edward. The mayor asked "If there were any other candidates?"

"Yes," said drunken Tom, who had found his way in thither, "I 'm another candidate."

"But who proposes and seconds you, Tom?" asked the mayor good-humouredly.

"Oh, I propose and second myself, to save my friends the trouble," replied Tom; "and as many as are for me hold up their hands." Tom held up both of his. "I 'm a Radical," said Tom, "and so you won't support me. Clapperton for ever!"

The mayor waited a few minutes and then declared Sir Edward Clapperton, Baronet, to be duly elected.

"Beggars description!" said his lordship to Sir Edward, taking hold of his hand. "You

are member for Warnstable, and I wish you health, wealth, and happiness!"

"Thank you a million times!" replied Sir Edward; and then he addressed the electors and inhabitants as follows:—

"No language of which I am master, Mr. Mayor, and burgesses of this venerable and respectable borough, can convey to you in terms sufficiently strong my gratitude, and my joy. No dissentient hand has been held up against me. No unpleasant observation or disagreeable remark has spoiled the harmony of this scene. You know my principles. When I shall cease to be what I am, I will resign my seat. If I should see any sufficient reason for changing my opinions on any great and important questions, I will resign into your hands the trust you have committed to my care. I pledge myself to do all I can to promote the happiness and prosperity of your borough. To your local interests I will constantly attend; and if on any great political question we may so differ as to occasion dissatisfaction or uneasiness to your minds, you

have only to ask me to resign, and my seat shall be at your disposal. Again allow me to thank you for this signal mark of your confidence and esteem, and to assure you that I shall carry to my grave a sense of your kindness and respect."

The Town-hall rung with applause. Lord Swainton did nothing but exclaim "Beggars description! Beggars description!" except write off to the Miss Clappertons the following *billet doux*:—

"Huzza! huzza! huzza! Clapperton for ever!

"No opposition!

"Sir Edward returned without a dissentient voice!

"Beggars description!

"My Dear Ladies,

"The above bulletin will convey all that is necessary to state, except that the candidate is as well as can be expected, after having kissed during the last five days at least five thousand pair of pretty pouting lips. For

my part, I would not envy him the five thousand, if I possessed but one pair in Milsom Street. The member sends his love; Sir Felix his best compliments; and Captain Macfarlane talks incessantly, even in his sleep I am told, of Miss Lucy. What shall I say? Nothing more than that I hope soon to be at your feet.

"Your faithful and obliged servant,

"SWAINTON."

"Come, give me the first frank for your sisters," said his lordship.

"I cannot do that," replied Sir Edward; "I will give you the second,—the first I promised to my old maiden cousin, Miss Maplestone; and I must write her two lines." He did so.

The third frank was for Mrs. Catherwood. His note was short and expressive.

"DEAREST MRS. CATHERWOOD,

"Five minutes since they made me an M.P.

"Love to Maria, and all your family circle, from yours ever truly, E. CLAPPERTON."

"P.S. George is quite well."

In the afternoon, Sir Edward was chaired. The chairing was splendid. At night the theatre was opened gratis to the public; a public dinner was given at each of the two great inns; and, in the course of the evening, Sir Edward addressed the guests at both hotels. The next day there was a splendid ball; the gentry from the neighbourhood attended; Warnstable was most gay; and it was not till the third day after the election, that Sir Edward and his friends left that place, to return to Bath. Not one untoward circumstance transpired during the whole of the election proceedings; and, as Lord Swainton waved, for the last time, his hand to the pretty girls at the windows, who had collected to witness the departure, he sunk back exhausted with fatigue and excitement, and exclaimed, "Beggars description! beggars description!"

CHAPTER VII.

Come, gather up your windfalls.

EVELYN.

I am most fortunate thus accidentally to encounter you: you have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.—SHAKSPEARE.

LORD SWAINTON began to get tired of travelling, and was really so wearied with the excitement and agitation, outlandish hours, irregular feastings, and perpetual efforts of the last six weeks, that now the end was obtained, the object accomplished, and himself in possession of 2600*l.* over and above all his expenditure, he slept during a great part of the journey from Warnstable to Exeter. But no sooner did he wake at varied intervals of from ten minutes to an hour at a time, than one fixed

idea pervaded all his conversation; — it was the marriage of Sir Edward.

"You must get a wife,—indeed you must!" said his lordship. "Some lovely, beautiful, warbling, exquisite bird, who will carol to you, sing to you, caress you, love you, nestle you under her wing, soft, warm, and tender; who will study with you, read with you, play with you, laugh with you, travel with you, talk with you, eat with you, drink with you, sleep with you, and all that sort of thing;—a perfect Hebe, Flora, Venus; or all of them together."

"I am sure, my lord," said Sir Edward, "I cannot do better than place myself under your directions. You have made me an M.P., and I see no reason now why you should not convert me into a Benedict. But I may perhaps retort upon you, and say 'Really, my lord, you ought to get a wife, too; a man of your talents, fortune, family, estates, wit, knowledge, fund of amusement, and most agreeable and gentlemanly habits, ought not to remain a widower.'"

"I think not, either," retorted his lordship; "and I have thought so for some weeks past. Ha! ha! ha! — he! he! he!"

Sir Edward understood at once what his lordship meant; but as Sir Felix and Captain Smallman were present, and as they were just entering Exeter, which direction they had taken in order to convey Captain Smallman home, he merely laughed, and replied, "You are too good, my lord. I think I must get married."

At Exeter, Captain Smallman quitted the carriage; Sir Edward also alighted.

"Will you allow me to say a word with you, captain?" asked Sir Edward; and they proceeded into a private sitting-room.

"Pens, ink, and paper," said Sir Edward to the waiter, as they entered the room, and they were brought in an instant.

"I am greatly in your debt," said Sir Edward to the captain. "I do not at all know the amount. A portion of the debt I can never pay, but by my gratitude. Another portion it *is* possible to discharge. You have been put

to much inconvenience, and to considerable expense on my account, and you must allow me to discharge these."

"They are paid already," replied Captain Smallman. "Lord Swainton has discharged all my travelling expenses, and my residence at the inn cost me nothing."

"Still you must allow me to ——"

"To what?" answered the captain: "not to pay me for my time, I hope? No, Sir Edward, I have enjoyed ten days most thoroughly —perhaps more than I shall ever do again; and it is I who have to thank you, instead of you to feel indebted to me. There is, indeed, one favour I would ask. I have a few play and other debts at Bath. Three hundred pounds would pay them: and a loan ——"

Sir Edward's heart bounded with joy: an opportunity was thus afforded him of rendering service to one who had devoted himself so zealously to his cause and interests.

"I will give you a cheque for the amount,— and return it me by such remittances out of your half-pay as shall suit your convenience."

"You are a prince of a man," replied the captain, and in spite of his manly heart, and the rubs of ill fortune he had so often experienced, a large tear or two stole down his cheeks.

Sir Edward saw them. "I am your friend," said Sir Edward, "rely upon me; If your pecuniary obligations are of a greater amount, tell me so, and I am at your service."

"They are not indeed," replied the captain with great emotion, and seizing the hand of Sir Edward he shook it as heartily as he felt. "I am once more a happy man. I shall live on my half-pay; and with your permission will continue my journey to Bath, personally discharge my debts, and return to peace and quiet in that city."

"I shall be delighted indeed thus to secure your good company to Milsom Street; and remember my house is your home, not only now, but always; and if on arriving at Bath you find that there are a few more debts remaining unsettled than have occurred to you at this moment, it will be a pleasure further to assist you."

"That will not be the case," replied the captain, who knew too well the amount of his embarrassments and every item of their details to require any further investigation on his part: "this cheque will set me free; and the manner in which you have allowed me to repay you will indeed render me a happy man."

"I shall accept Sir Edward's kind invitation to proceed to Bath," said the captain to his lordship as he returned to the carriage, the horses having been changed during the conversation in the parlour: "a few days there will be spent most agreeably; they will set me up for the rest of the year, and I shall return to my home with ease of mind and cheerful spirits."

Lord Swainton guessed what had passed. He knew that a few hundred pounds would make Smallman happy; but he felt amazed that Sir Edward should be acquainted with the fact. "What will Sir Edward think now of my statement to him that Captain Smallman once intended to become a candidate for the borough of Warnstable, when he borrows a

few hundred pounds of him some weeks afterwards; for I am sure he has borrowed of him."

Lord Swainton alighted from the carriage. "You will go and tell Susan of your intentions," said his lordship to the captain, "and I will stretch my legs for a few minutes and accompany you." Sir Edward said he would avail himself of their absence to run and look once more at the cathedral. Scrope and Sir Felix resolved on "souping" in the interim; and Macfarlane and young Catherwood accompanied Sir Edward in his short walk.

"Smallman," said Lord Swainton, "tell me frankly what has changed your purpose? why do you go to Bath?"

The captain related to him all that had transpired.

"I had told Sir Edward that you thought at one time of becoming a candidate for Warnstable. What will he think now?"

"Oh, leave that to me," said the captain; "I will set all that to rights in the course of our journey. The opportunity of saving myself was too valuable and important to be

missed. And now I must clear you as well as I can. Trust to me."

Susan fully expected her master. He had written to say so; but she did not expect the pleasure of seeing Lord Swainton. She had not forgotten his kindness on Christmas-day, and her young heart bounded towards him as if he had been her benefactor.

"Well, Susan," said his lordship, "as blooming as ever, eh?—as charming as ever, eh? You never wrote and told me how many kisses your lover gave you under the mistletoe, eh? If I had been him, I shouldn't have left off from one Christmas-day to another. Such eyes,—such cheeks,—such lips! Beggars description!"

The captain endeavoured to preserve his gravity; Susan blushed very much indeed; and his lordship continued:

"Well, I'm going to run away with the captain again. We are not going to stop two minutes. He is going on with me to Bath. Odd trick that to run away with the captain. Run away with you, say something to it. Beggars description!"

The girl laughed, the captain did the same thing, and then informed her that he should be absent about a week longer; but should then return quite at ease in his mind, and prepared to be happy during the whole winter.

"If you please, sir, the grocer is quite impertinent," said Susan, "about his rubbishing bill; and says ——"

"How much is it?" asked the captain.

"Four pounds twelve shillings," replied Susan.

"There 's a five pound note," said his lordship; "keep the eight shillings for yourself; and the captain will repay me at Bath, where he will receive money."

Susan felt as happy as if any one had given her the 5*l.* for herself. The grocer had taken advantage of the little debt of her master to joke and laugh with her very impertinently; and poor Susan could not give him a slap of the face, as she otherwise would have done very often, since the debt of 4*l.* 12*s.* stood in the way.

"Let me go and pay him directly, sir,"

asked Susan, whilst you are here; I long to do so. It will not take me five minutes; and may I say that I will never enter the shop again?"

"Certainly," replied the captain, who knew well the insolence of this dealer in tea and sugar.

Susan bustled out, took the *5l.* note and the bill with her, and hastened to the grocer's.

"I have come to pay you your trumpery bill," said Susan as she entered the shop. "I suppose you thought the captain would never pay you."

"Oh no, my dear Susan," retorted the grocer. "I knew the captain was an honourable man."

"Don't dear me — and Susan me," said the girl; "I've put up with too much of your impertinence already, on account of this bill; receipt it—give me eight shillings, and I will never set my foot in your shop again as long as I live."

"Why, what's the matter, my dear Susan?" inquired the grocer with some apparent or af-

fected surprise; "are not my teas and sugars, plums and butter, as good as you can get anywhere else?"

"No," replied Susan; "and if they were the very best in the world, I would not buy them the more for that. When you doubted my master's word and honour, and thought you should not be paid, you often insulted me; and now I have paid you, you will never see my face again. You are paid, Mr. Grocer."

"You are an impertinent hussy," said the grocer; "and I shall acquaint the captain with your conduct."

"I dare you to do so," replied Susan, and she left the shop.

When she returned to the captain's cottage she was evidently agitated, and her cheeks burned with excitement.

"Thank you, captain—thank you, my lord," said Susan, hardly knowing what she said. "I've given it him well. I told him what I thought of him. Insolent creature!"

His lordship was curious to know all that passed, and Susan recounted the conversation.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted his lordship. "Here 's half a sovereign more for you, Susan; buy a new gown: only mind you let it be a pretty pink or a pretty blue, but neither yellow, nor green, for the one is jealousy, and the other means forsaken. Let 's be off, captain."

Susan smiled most bewitchingly, and she repeated as he left the cottage, "I 'm very much obliged to you, my lord; I shall never forget you!"

The strollers and the "soupers" soon met at the inn; the carriages were regained; and nothing of importance occurred till they arrived at Ilminster.

"Swainton, how are you?" said a tall, gentlemanly-looking man, of about six feet high, with a fine expansive chest, noble face, and looking and speaking like a king, or a prince royal; "what in the world do you do in these parts at this moment? Why, I should have imagined you just in the opposite direction. I congratulate you with all my heart."

It was the Marquis of Charmouth.

"I am delighted to see you," replied Lord Swainton, "and who is not, that has the honour of your acquaintance? but why you congratulate me with all your heart, I really cannot tell, except that I look as well as I feel. Have you heard, then, of the Warnstable election?"

"Warnstable election?" asked the marquis, with unfeigned surprise; "what in the world have you to do, Swainton, with the Warnstable election? No; I congratulated you on your uncle's death, you know, without a will."

"What uncle? what do you mean? I don't understand you. I am wholly ignorant——"

"Indeed," replied the marquis. "Oh, I have just read in The Times, of the sudden death of your old uncle, Lord Warminster, who was struck with apoplexy, and has died without a will."

"Without a will?" asked Lord Swainton; "without a will?"

"Yes, without a will," replied the marquis.

"Then I inherit estates of the value of

30,000*l.* per annum," said his lordship; "besides my share of his personal property."

"I think you might have added your favourite phrase," said the marquis, "beggars description!"

"I might, indeed," replied his lordship; "but I confess I am staggered. The fact is, I have been to Warnstable with a very clever, nice young fellow, though a sort of city man, who has just been elected member for that borough, and I am on my way back to Bath. He 's a Tory to the backbone; and has much pluck, and a good deal of ready money."

"Where is he?" inquired the marquis: "where is he? I should like to congratulate him. Our cause is wanting support at this moment. The King gets very weak; I fear he will not live long; and if we have a dissolution there will be a sad smash."

"And where is The Times?" asked Lord Swainton of the Marquis; "for you must suppose I wish to see my own good fortune in black and white, just to see how I look in print. You know very well I had not spoken

to Lord Warminster for many years. If he had had time in his last illness to make a will, he would have cut me off with a sixpence, or a bad farthing, he was so enraged with me for leaving the Whig party. Ware Park—Grove Lodge — those fine estates in Wiltshire — his Marine Villa—all mine! Impossible! Thirty thousand a-year at least. Beggars description!"

"I think, more than that," said the marquis. "He was an odd fellow: the stiffest old bachelor I ever saw in my life. He was once a great friend of Charles James Fox; but the stiffness and buckram of your uncle displeased him much, and in the latter years of Fox they saw but little of each other. However, he 's stiff enough now; and I hope with all my heart, it will be a long while, Swainton, before you are as stiff as he is. Here 's The Times."

"You 're very good — very good — very good!" said his lordship, who read in The Times the following announcement, at the same time that he kept on repeating, "very good—very good."

"SUDDEN DEATH OF LORD WARMINSTER. — His lordship was yesterday morning suddenly attacked by an apoplectic fit, and died in less than an hour, at the advanced age of eighty-four. His lordship was descended from the Earl of Warminster, the founder of the family, who died in 1478. His heir-at-law is the present Lord Swainton; and as Lord Warminster has died without a will, his lordship will succeed to his fine unentailed estates in Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire. It is believed that Lord Swainton is at this moment on the Continent."

"Indeed he is not!" said his lordship; "for here I am alive and hearty, and fully prepared to enter into possession of my dear uncle's estates. Ha! ha! ha! poor Warminster. He told me the last time I saw him, 'You've deserted the principles of your family; and you might starve on a dunghill before I would help you.' Admirable uncle! valuable friend! delightful relative! Beggars description!" and then his lordship read over and over again the paragraph in The Times until he fairly knew it by heart.

"Allow me to introduce to you, marquis, my young friend, Sir Edward Clapperton," said his lordship. "He has just been returned for Warnstable, and is an out and out Tory, fully prepared to back you and your friends, and will be delighted to see you Secretary of State for the Home Department."

"With all my heart," replied the marquis; "that would just suit me."

The marquis then congratulated Sir Edward on his successful parliamentary campaign, and asked him, "who were the friends who would introduce him to the House?"

"I have not thought of that," replied Sir Edward. "I know all the city members."

"They are very respectable men," said the marquis; "but do you belong to the city, then?"

"Oh, no," replied Sir Edward. "I and the city have cut years ago."

"I thought so," said his lordship.

"If you, my dear marquis, will introduce Sir Edward," said Lord Swainton, "I know Colonel Bell will join you; and thus my young

friend will enter the House under good auspices."

"With all my heart," replied the marquis; "you know, Swainton, I am always willing to oblige you."

"And I hope you will now find me equally willing," responded his lordship, alluding to his improved fortunes.

"I am convinced of that," said the marquis; "and one of these days I may not forget your promise. The old duke is hale and hearty, and money is not always as plentiful as this snow,"—which was then falling most heavily.

The marquis accepted an invitation from Sir Edward to join the dinner party; and Lord Swainton then communicated to his friends the intelligence he had just received. The following was his facetious mode of making known the news.

"Well, Sir Edward,—Warminster 's dead: no will; I am his heir. A nice little boy, heir to a nasty great uncle. Meant to cut me off with a groat: forgot to do it. Death came, and behaved better. Cut me off with

30,000*l.* a-year. Happy to see you at Swainton — happy to see you at Ware Park — at Grove Lodge—and at my marine villa in Dorsetshire. Don't know where it is. Scrope will find out. Here, Scrope, here's The Times. Read this."

Scrope could not believe his own eyes. "My dear father!" he exclaimed, "I congratulate you with all my heart!"

"I know you do," replied Lord Swainton, who, though he concealed his agitation as well as he could, still betrayed some emotion; "and Grove Lodge is yours for life. Take your little quiet wife there as soon as you will. There are bees, and flowers, and trees, and rooks, and crows, and buttercups; and she may be as quiet as a tom-tit, or as a robin-redbreast this cold weather. Beggars description!"

"Thank you, for Peggy," said Scrope; "she has often said that of all places in the world she ever saw, Grove Lodge she should like best to live in. I must write to her immediately. God bless her! she'll hardly know

whether she stands on her head or her heels. Grove Lodge !—poor Peggy will be as happy, not as the days are long, for they are short enough just now, but as happy as the days will be long by the time we are all settled down there."

Never was an odder dinner than the one in question. The Times paragraph was read by all. All were rejoiced. Sir Felix secretly hoped that Lord Swainton would now lend him such a sum as would enable him to propose himself in marriage to Sophia ; George Catherwood was overwhelmed with a feeling of the vastly rich, great, and noble people who surrounded him ; Captain Smallman blessed in his heart the day that Lord Swainton had met him at Exeter ; Captain Macfarlane prided himself in being a member of so successful and fortunate an expedition ; the Marquis of Charmouth had no doubt that Swainton would assist him in some important financial arrangements ; and Sir Edward Clapperton thought within himself, " What a lucky fellow I am to have made the acquaintance of

Lord Swainton. I have my seat for 7,000*l.*; I shall be introduced to Parliament by two first-rate men; I shall associate with the first society in the land; and if Lord Swainton should propose to Charlotte, I shall be the brother-in-law of a peer, and that peer, rich, talented, witty, and influential. His lordship would say 'Beggars description!' and I am sure I think it does."

The dinner party ate but little, though the dinner was admirable; but some champagne and game went off well; and the party resolved on remaining there the night, and on sending on the Italian courier to Bath to apprize the ladies that they should not arrive till the next afternoon. Sir Edward wrote as follows:—

"My dear Girls,

"Lord Swainton has just fell in with the Marquis of Charmouth, who has informed him that an uncle of his lordship's, amazingly rich, has died without a will, and that as his heir he will succeed to all his freehold estates. We have been talking this affair over so long, that

it is now nine o'clock, and we are forty-three miles from you. Besides, his lordship is fatigued with his incessant toils during the last six weeks, and I have prevailed on him to remain here the night. We are all well, and as you will readily believe in excellent spirits; but longing to see you. The Marquis of Charmouth and Colonel Bell are to introduce me to the House. All goes on most admirably. I fear you are dull,—but to-morrow we shall be with you. His lordship and all his friends are all sending messages at the same moment. Lord Swainton says, he longs 'to throw himself at your feet.' Sir Felix says, 'his heart kisses your hands,'—a rather awkward mode of kissing, I confess. Captain Macfarlane 'hopes Miss Lucy has no longer a pain in her chest;'—I think, though, the captain has the heart-ache. Catherwood sends his love to you all. And Captain Smallman desires me to say for him, 'all that is most amiable and polite.' I fancy he could say this much better himself, for he is a remarkably nice fellow. Now, then, girls,

be up and alive. Your present quiet house will soon be noisy enough; and take care of both hands and hearts, for I should not be be surprised if desperate assaults should be made on both. Love to Lucy: and when you write to the Catherwoods, do not forget to say all that is kind from

"Yours very affectionately,

"EDWARD."

"And what are the prospects of the Tory party?" asked Lord Swainton of the marquis, as they sat round the well-spread mahogany, with the best wine and fruits that Ilminster could afford.

"Not very good," replied the marquis; "I fear, when our admirable King shall die, it will be all up with us. George IV. cares not one straw about popularity. He does what he believes to be right and wise, and most conducive to the permanent interests of his people, and is wholly indifferent with regard to the popularity of his measures, or of those of his ministers. Though I think him de-

cidedly wrong with reference to the Catholic question, yet he opposed those with whom he was most popular, because he thought that the moment had come when resistance was no longer possible. He stood out to the last; but the Duke and Sir Robert overcame him. His death will lead to vast alterations; and I fear it is nearer than most of us expect."

"I am sorry for that," said Sir Edward; "the King is a most perfect gentleman, I am told, and a very decided Protestant."

"His successor will act on very different principles," observed Lord Swainton; "a sailor,— a rover,— a lover of naval excursions and yacht-clubs; a remarkably good-tempered man, but too fond of popularity,— without fixed political principles,— liable to be drawn into the vortex of popular politics by the Whigs, and incapable of resisting them. His reign will be short and turbulent, if he should ascend the throne."

"But what do you think of the present aspect of affairs in France?" asked the marquis of Lord Swainton; "you have lived a

good deal abroad at various times in your life, and know these people better than I do."

"I defy all the angels in heaven," replied his lordship, "to know what *one* Frenchman will do the next ten minutes,—and much less what *thirty odd millions* of them will be about. They have no notion themselves. They are forming associations just now to resist the payment of taxes in case they should be levied without being first legally voted. What right have they to presume that Polignac will levy taxes without having his budget first passed? He is the last man in the world to attempt such a measure. He may stretch the construction of a clause in the charter a little, but he would never desire to violate it. The French get sick of all and everything in their turn. Ever since the philosophers took them in hand they have been a sad vagabond set: revolutions, republics, consulates, empires, the old monarchy, the empire again, a second restoration, and now the preparatory measures for another revolution. All have been tried—and many more will be the phases of their ex-

traordinary career before they will be satisfied. Despotism suited them the longest. When they have war they fight for peace; when they have peace they fight for war; when they are lightly ruled they rave; and when they are heavily governed they obey. And yet despotism would not suit them always; but on the whole it is the best for them. The French have no fixed principles. If they were all polled tomorrow, each one would have some variation in his scheme of government from all the rest. No two men are agreed upon any one principle of government. This is the capital error in the public mind, and it is this which encourages despots on the one hand, and faction on the other. Polignac knows this. He wants to re-establish the ancient monarchy; and if Charles X. were such a man as our George IV. he would succeed. But Polignac has no army. The body guards and the Swiss are devoted men; but what could they do against the armed *canaille* of Paris? It would be possible to do anything with a large and devoted army; but the army has been corrupted by

the press and the liberals during the last fourteen years, and any attempt to suspend the liberty of the press would lead to tremendous commotions. Polignac declares in his correspondence with his friends here, that he has no intention whatever to resort to a *coup d'état.* I hope he speaks the truth,—but he is a bit of a Jesuit. I do not see how the King can recede. He cannot think of giving up now; that would be impossible. A crisis, therefore, must come, and it will have a tremendous influence here; and yet a revolution seems next to inevitable."

The conversation was prolonged to a late hour, all parties in their turn joining in it except young Catherwood, who noted well the conflicting opinions of those present, who, although they had joined to bring in a Tory candidate at Warnstable, scarcely thought alike upon any one question.

"I hope you will oppose any attempt to repeal or change the corn-laws," said the marquis to Sir Edward.

"Oh, most assuredly!" was the reply of

the M.P. for Warnstable. "I am of opinion that the agricultural interests require our first care, and they may rely on my vote."

"But such interests are far from being those of your constituency, Sir Edward," observed Captain Macfarlane.

"I am sorry for that," replied the new M.P.; "but you know, captain, I informed them distinctly that on some points we might differ; and this is one of them. I must support the aristocracy of the country. What would the farmer do if the landlord were ruined?—and what would the labourer do if the farmer were ruined?—and what would any of us do if the labourer were ruined? The truth is we must stick to the aristocracy. And the aristocracy are the landowners. Oh, yes! I must support the aristocracy, captain!"

"This is noble language," said the Marquis of Charmouth; "I wish we had a few more who thought so just now; but all our late elections have been amazingly unfortunate. My old valet, a Frenchman, who has been many years with us, and knows English politics, the

rascal! better than I do; said to me the other day, 'Marquis, I tink that Tory go to de wall; and I tink Wigs come into de fashion.' 'I think so too,' I replied, 'Eugene; but we say in England, 'every dog has his day,' and the days of the Whigs will not be very long ones.' 'So I tink,' replied Eugene; and for that time," added the marquis, "we thought alike. This does not occur very often, for he is the most conceited scamp on the face of the earth, and yet a most admirable servant."

Sir Edward was so pleased with the marquis that he invited him to Milsom Street and to Clapham Hall, whenever he could and would honour him with his society; and the marquis accepted the general invitation with real dignity and affability.

The next morning all left for Bath at the same hour, and arrived at Milsom Street about four. The Marquis of Charmouth proceeded to London; but all the rest alighted at Sir Edward's.

When Sir Edward entered the hall at Milsom Street, he heard the sound of music.

Whence did it proceed? A flute, a violin, a hautboy, a harp, and a piano, were all playing at once; and the air "See the conquering hero comes," was performed most charmingly. The Miss Clappertons had hired an admirable band, and placed their own piano and harp at their disposal. The musicians were stationed in the breakfast-parlour, and during the whole evening they delighted their visiters by their varied airs, marches, and other performances.

"This is a most agreeable surprise, my sweet sisters," said Sir Edward, as he advanced to embrace them. "I am more delighted with this, if possible, than with even my new title of M.P."

Lord Swainton kissed Miss Charlotte's hand; Sir Felix did the same to Miss Sophia's; and the captain said, "How do *you* do, Miss Lucy?" with so much of earnestness and warmth that all present laughed outright most jovially. As to young Catherwood, he did as he always did, kissed both the Miss Clappertons, and shook hands with Miss Lucy; Scrope ven-

tured to press hands; whilst Captain Smallman stood like "the knight of the sorrowful countenance," and sighed for some fair maiden to whom he might aspire, or at any rate for a sly kiss of pretty Susan at Exeter. For a long while the talking was so loud, the congratulations so numerous, and the laughing, exclaiming, questioning, answering, so vehement, that the scene resembled some well managed madhouse, where every one was allowed to be uproarious, on condition of not being violent. They all did as they pleased, and Lord Swainton was their keeper.

The Miss Clappertons felicitated his lordship and Scrope on the large addition to their estates; but as the former believed that Lord Swainton was already immensely rich, Charlotte observed, "They were aware it was only a drop of water added to the sea, but it must have been more agreeable from having been wholly unexpected."

Scrope laughed heartily, and said "Many such drops as those would drown them."

As to Sir Edward, he had to sit down and

give franks the moment the hubbub had somewhat ceased, for the letters were ready written by the Miss Clappertons and Lucy to their friends, to announce Sir Edward's success, and his arrival at Bath. It was six o'clock before the gentlemen retired to their rooms to prepare for dinner. Lord Swainton once more reached his well-known bed-room; and his musings were full of satisfaction and happiness.

"Scrope," said his lordship, calling to his son, who was in the next room to him, "I want you. I have no doubt whatever of the correctness of this paragraph in "The Times;" but as it will not do to rely wholly on that evidence, I wish you to set off post to London early to-morrow. Go to Lord Warminster's solicitors, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, with a letter I will write to them; if the event be true, take another letter I will write to Coutts's, and bring down with you 3,000*l.* If, contrary to all expectations, it should not be true, you will not visit the bankers at all, but communicate to me privately at the York Hotel here, where I will meet you, the result of your

visit. If it be true, come to this house with the 3,000*l.*"

"Certainly," said Scrope: "but I am sure it is true; there are three newspapers below, all of which contain the same intelligence, though not in the same words: every one mentions his dying intestate."

The dining-room at Milsom Street had been ornamented by the Miss Clappertons with the colours of their brother. A green and white flag waved from the ceiling, over the head of the table where Sir Edward would be seated. Over the spot where Lord Swainton was to sit, another flag waved. The arms of his lordship were painted thereon, and underneath was written, "GRATEFUL SISTERS TO A KIND AND NOBLE FRIEND." Opposite Sir Felix Montague's plate was a beautiful nosegay of white hothouse roses and green laurel leaves, with several white camelias.

Similar bouquets, all tied round with white and green ribands, were placed opposite each electioneering friend at table; and George Catherwood's nosegay was not less splendid than

the rest: it had a beautiful white satin wrapper, on which was worked "Many thanks, kind brother Catherwood."

The room was lighted wholly with wax lights, and a profusion of green and white garlands and festoons of flowers were suspended from candelabra to candelabra. The effect was magical. As Sir Edward entered the room, the band struck up "God save the King!" and he burst into tears.

"You are angels!" said Sir Edward, with great emotion; and forgetting all the ceremonies and etiquette of good society, he rushed to his sisters and embraced them.

"Indeed you are angels!" added Lord Swainton. "This flag that waves over my head, I would not part with for worlds of gold, or oceans of pearls and diamonds. Beggars description! beggars description! beggars description! By Jove it does! I am mad with delight!"

Nearly a quarter of an hour elapsed before the covers were removed; and when this was done, still another quarter of an hour before

the guests could take off their eyes from the green and white garlands, lamps, nosegays, flags, banners, and numberless beauties, both natural and artificial, which surrounded them.

Of course the viands were delicious and the wines perfect. The band struck up "Rule Britannia," and Lord Swainton was once more in ecstasies.

"I would have given the world for Arabella to have witnessed this scene," said his lordship; "how her young heart would have bounded with joy! I must write to all my girls this evening whilst spell-bound by this fairy scene. I have witnessed *fêtes* at Venice, Naples, Paris, Windsor, and at the Pagoda at Brighton; but this sets them all at defiance. Beggars description!"

"Oh, how delightful!" said Charlotte, "once more to hear your 'Beggars description!' my lord; Sophia, Lucy, and myself have been longing to hear it again."

"But how should I have longed to be here," replied his lordship; "if I had known you were preparing this precious flag, this kindest

proof of your goodness and esteem. I cannot tell you what I feel. Old times,—by-gone days, — youthful pleasures, — happy, happy years,—all—all—come before me. I am young again. I feel once more a boy of twenty-five. Beggars description!"

The wine passed round; the ladies consented to make an exception to the general rule: toast after toast was drank—not forgetting "Prosperity to the Borough of Warnstable."

"The ladies Swainton, his lordship's daughters," proposed Sir Edward, and his lordship almost danced with joy.

"It is my turn next," said Charlotte. "I propose the health of his lordship, to whom you, dear Edward, are mainly indebted for the seat at Warnstable. The ladies have arranged our toasts for this occasion, and we must have our way to-day."

Lord Swainton could no longer keep his seat. He embraced the flag, kissed the flowers which had been arranged by the ladies, and made a speech which was so clever, and so laughable, that every one in the room did not go into

hysterics, but laughed till their eyes were full of tears.

"And I propose the health of Sir Felix Montague," said Sophia, who had charged herself with this toast; "and may he long live to see his friend the member for Warnstable an useful and honourable representative."

Sir Felix declared he was quite overpowered, and actually unable to express all he felt; but his speech was as clever as it was short, and delighted every one.

"I have the privilege," said Lucy, "of including the Honourable Scrope Cramwell, Captain Macfarlane, Captain Smallman, and Mr. Catherwood in my toast, and may they all live till they die."

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Lord Swainton, and every one laughed right merrily. Each of the heroes returned thanks in their turn, and George Catherwood's speech was one of the best.

Between each toast of the ladies, the band played a new national or other air; and when these had been performed, and George Cather-

wood, the last speaker, had finished his short oration, Charlotte rose and said,—

"Now, my lord, *our* feast to the gentlemen is over. We have given *our* banquet. Long live the member for Warnstable!"

"Long live the member for Warnstable!" repeated Sophia and Lucy, as Lord Swainton opened the door, and the gentlemen formed a row through which the ladies passed.

"The ladies—the ladies!" cried Lord Swainton, the moment the Miss Clappertons and Lucy had withdrawn, "and with nine times nine."

The band played on; toast after toast was given, and not till the gentlemen had been twice summoned to the drawing-room, did they leave the festive board.

On returning to the drawing-room new scenes of enchantment awaited them. The decorators of the theatre had been previously ordered to prepare everything necessary for adorning the drawing-room during the two hours in which all were assembled in the dining-room; and the effect was magical. The arms of

Sir Edward, previously prepared in white and green, were placed at the end of the room immediately fronting the door of entrance: they were painted on white satin, and behind it were a multitude of lamps, which gave it the effect of a brilliant transparency; festoons of flowers round the room, and splendid bouquets on the centre tables; small wax lights placed in alternate ground glass and green small glasses suspended in various directions, delighted, but bewildered the eye; and the ladies, who had purposely changed their toilettes for this evening of festivity, were dressed in character. Charlotte appeared as Terpsichore, Sophia as one of the Graces, and Lucy as Flora. They all looked most lovely; and as the gentlemen entered the room the band struck up "The Dame Blanche." The most perfect silence now succeeded to the noise and mirth of the dining and toasting table. Some rubbed their eyes; others asked "where they were?" Sir Edward thought he had drank, perhaps, too much wine, or was in a dream. Lord Swainton could not believe he had ever

seen that room before. As to Catherwood, he did nothing but look astonished and raise his eyes and his hands to the ceiling. But none spoke.

"Why don't you speak, Edward?" asked Charlotte.

"What do you think of our drawing-room?" inquired Sophia of Sir Felix, who was wondering with the rest what all these things could mean.

"Come, my lord," said Lucy, "I am sure you will say something."

"Yes, I will, indeed," replied his lordship; "but it must all be summed up in two words. You are angels—and it beggars description!"

This phrase broke the ice. Sir Edward did the best he could to express his gratitude and love. Sir Felix whispered something in Sophia's ear about "how happy should he be if he could aspire to possess one thus highly gifted in mind, taste, and heart;" and Captain Macfarlane never said in all his life so many civil things as he did that evening to pretty Lucy.

"We will see this out," said his lordship. "Country dances the rest of the evening."

And away they danced till past two in the morning, his lordship being at the close of the scene the most gay and witty of the party. As Scrope had to leave for London at seven, he prudently retired at twelve: and a little before three this charming pageant had terminated. The most grateful of the party was Sir Edward, and he felt yet more than ever the force and worth of sisterly love.

CHAPTER VIII.

She 'd prove herself a Tory plain,
From principles the Whigs maintain,
And to defend the Whiggish cause,
Her topics from the Tories draws.

SWIFT.

The Knight is more a Tory in the country than the town, because it more advances his interest.

ADDISON.

AT seven o'clock precisely Scrope left for London. Lord Swainton saw him off. He wrote to his bankers, and to the solicitors of the late Lord Warminster, before he retired to rest, and gave them to Scrope at seven. Few men were so active as his lordship. He could rise early, sit up late, and never felt fatigue. He had more of quicksilver in his composition than belonged to most men, and considering his age, past life, and unrestrained habits of pleasure-taking, he was really a most

astonishing person. Neither cold nor heat affected him. He could eat, or starve; sleep, or not rest for nights together; could walk night and day, or never take exercise. In fact, he was a surprising man, and his constant flow of spirits was not the least extraordinary part of his character.

Although it was past three o'clock when he went to sleep, after a day of great fatigue and excitement, he rose at seven on a dark January morning, with a thermometer at freezing point, rang for a fire in his room, sorted all the election papers and accounts, examined all the documents of Sam Pocock, and by nine o'clock had prepared a debtor and creditor account with himself of receipts and payments, which would have done honour to the cashier of the first banking-house at Bath.

"Thus there is a balance of 2,140*l.* in my favour," said his lordship, "presuming that Mr. Walter will accept 300*l.* for his commission: I must write and see. I borrowed 100*l.* of Sir Oscar: he has not yet applied for the payment, but he may do so. If Walter insists on the whole of his 500*l.* (which he can do if he chooses), and if I return the 100*l.* to

Sir Oscar, the 2,140*l.* will be reduced to 1,840*l.* No great sum, after all, to win with such risks of a contested election in my teeth when I made the wager. Now then for my girls." He wrote to them all. Arabella he desired to prepare for visiting Bath. To the other daughters and sons he also wrote most affectionately, and expressed his hopes that their past separation and unhappiness were over, and that by the death of Lord Warminster they would soon be collected once more in the long-deserted family mansion at Swainton. "God grant it may be so!" said his lordship: "to see the old hall brilliant once more, foaming tankards, a respectful tenantry, obedient and willing servants, devoted farmers, but, above all, my children happy. I think Charlotte Clapperton would neither excite their anger nor their envy. She is not handsome, but kind-hearted; she would study to make them all happy, and her handsome fortune would add to the splendour of the establishment; her affable manners would win and woo them; and if she should perchance add two or three children to the house, her own fortune would be more than sufficient for them. She is ten years too young,

I admit; but she has great prudence and decorum, and would make an admirable wife. Beggars description!"

"My lord," said a well-known voice at the door of his lordship's bed-room about half-past nine, "are you moving?" It was Sir Felix.

"Nearly three hours ago," replied his lordship. "Come in."

"I want to have some serious chat with you," said Sir Felix as he entered.

"I know all about it," said Lord Swainton, "before you tell me. Over head and ears in love with Miss Sophia—charmed with herself, and not less charmed with her fortune; you have no doubt she is in love with you — have some fears respecting Sir Edward — don't know exactly the amount of her fortune — want to have my opinion before you commit yourself, — and wish to know whether I can help you with a loan of a few thousands, provided I at once enter into possession of the estates of my late uncle. Ha! ha! ha! — he! he! he! Beggars description!"

"Why indeed it does, my lord," replied Montague. "If you had been the king of conjurers, the first astrologer, soothsayer, and

fortune-teller in the universe, and could have read my thoughts as well as you can your own, you could not have described with greater accuracy all I desired to say."

"You are twenty-four hours at least, or rather thirty-six too soon in your interview, Montague. Scrope must come back from London before I can offer any advice, or give any opinion. Your prospects are closely identified with my own. To-day and to-morrow, or at least until Scrope shall return, keep yourself quiet. To-day we are to dine at Lady Muchberry's; to-morrow there is a dinner-party here; and the next day much shall be decided. Beggars description!"

"I understand you, in my turn," said Sir Felix; "and I will trouble you no further till the day after to-morrow. Shall we say nine in the morning?"

"With all my heart," replied Lord Swainton; "and till then let not one word, one look, one glance, betray your intentions, or compromise either you or myself."

"You may depend upon me," said Sir Felix: "I will be as discreet as a Quaker at a silent meeting."

Lord Swainton continued his correspondence. He wrote to Mr. Walter, and offered to place 300*l.* at his bankers; but expressed his feeling that such an amount would be an adequate compensation to him for his journey, especially as the unanimity which had prevailed at the election proved that his client, Lord Bourtonbury's son, would have had no chance at the borough of Warnstable. Then he wrote to Sam Pocock to inform him of their arrival at Bath, and to request him to let him know if any other demands than those already discharged could be made on Sir Edward or himself; and, finally, wrote to Horseroar, the chief and factotum of the outvoters, inclosing the price of each man's vote, just the same as if each one had attended at Warnstable, minus of course their travelling expenses.

Each visiter at Sir Edward's breakfasted that morning in his own room; and it was not till one that the luncheon-bell rung, and all assembled once more in the cheerful and gay dining-room. The mirth and late hours of the previous night had by no means left any impression of fatigue on the faces of either the Clappertons or their guests. They were

all in admirable spirits; and though Miss Sophia looked somewhat sentimental at Sir Felix, and blushed whenever he directed his conversation to her, with this trifling exception to the rule, all were at their ease; and they puzzled each other till nearly three o'clock with conundrums, rebusses, and riddles.

Captain Smallman indeed sallied forth at a much earlier hour. He visited the bankers of Sir Edward, obtained cash for his cheque of 300*l.*; proceeded to all his larger or smaller creditors one by one, to pay those debts the inability to discharge which had led to so many hours and days of care and anxiety; and at the end of the day found himself with 10*l.* in his pocket, besides an order on his agents for his next quarter's half-pay.

"I am a happy man indeed," said the captain to himself, as he entered the York Coffee-room at five o'clock. "I owe no one a brass farthing in all this city. Here I will dine, take a bottle of my favourite old port, retire early to rest at Sir Edward's, as they have all gone, or are all going to Lady Muchberry's, and to-morrow take leave of my good kind friend, and return to my cottage at Exeter.

This year has begun well at any rate with me. They talk of approaching revolutions in France, and, if we may believe 'O. P. Q.' in the Morning Chronicle, that event is not far distant. Be this as it may, there has been a complete revolution in *my* affairs, and it will be a long time indeed before I'll involve myself again in that most annoying of all classes of troubles, those which arise from small debts. I would rather owe one man 5,000*l.*, and be unable to pay him, than owe fifty little creditors 10*l.* each. These small creditors never will believe you cannot pay them. Each one reasons in the same manner. All protest that you can, ought, must, and shall; and as all are clamorous, none are paid. But paid they are now, and odd enough some of them looked when I called on them. Waiter, give me the bill of fare;" and the captain fared sumptuously, and retired at ten to his quiet bed-room at Sir Edward's.

The party at Lady Muchberry's was large but well selected. Twenty-five sat down to dinner, and Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, were all invited.

"Sir Edward Clapperton allow me to congra-

tulate you," said her ladyship. "I am a Whig; so is Nonpareil. You are a Tory; so is my old friend Lord Swainton. Mr. Burroughs is a Radical; so is Sir William Wadsworth. He is down here for a few days, and has promised me to come. Mr. Burroughs was once a city man; made some stir in the Greek loan; attends a vast deal to the commercial affairs of the country; is looking out for office, pay, and all that sort of thing, and would serve any party with fidelity who employed him. He does not conceal the fact that he is a Radical; but he would prefer occupation in some department of the state where his peculiar talent would be found useful, and where there would be very little of party or controversial politics to engage his attention; for instance, President of the Board of Trade. He is a very kind-hearted fellow, is an admirable poet, has a great talent for acquiring languages, is indefatigable in his labours and studies, and will, I think, please you much. But then he is a Radical. There is Colonel Fitzrobert too, a Whig of the Holland and Bedford school. Lord Grey thinks him mad; but he is admirable fun at a dinner-table. I hope you will

enjoy yourself." All this was said in a tone of secret confidence, and with an air of mystery, in a sort of whisper, wholly unintelligible to all except the person to whom it was addressed.

"You are very good, my lady," said Sir Edward. "I have met Mr. Burroughs before. He is a very clever man, but is suspected of jobbing, and this will always keep him in the back ground. The fact is, the aristocracy of this country will never forgive a man who is known either as a merchant or a speculator for the sake of obtaining income or support."

"You are quite right," replied Lady Muchberry; "a man may be a spendthrift, and be applauded; he may be a blackleg, and be laughed at; he may be poorer than a church mouse, and be seen in the best society; he may be over head and ears in debt, and be the favourite with all women of *haut ton* and good-breeding; he may gamble his last shilling away at Crockford's, and mortgage his children's inheritance, if he can do it, to enable him to play on,—he may run away with half-a dozen men's wives, and with half a thousand men's daughters, — and he will be caressed

and flattered the more by all the *beau monde*, who will look on him rather as a knight errant than a scoundrel. But if a man has once been a merchant, has speculated in trade,—is known as a speculator and as a merchant, or, at least, as having had his origin in the city, —there are thousands of stupid, silly, absurd people who will shun him. Such is the fate, more or less, of Burroughs."

"I think there is another reason also in this case," replied Sir Edward. "Some of his speculations have been unfortunate — and who is there that forgives an unfortunate man?— However, Burroughs is a very clever fellow, and I shall be happy to renew my acquaintance with him."

"I am very glad to see you, Sir Edward," said Mr. Burroughs, who shortly afterwards entered the room. "Allow me to congratulate you on your return for Warnstable."

"Why did not you start for Warnstable, Burroughs?" asked Sir William Wadsworth. "You would have driven Sir Edward hard. I am told there are some true patriots there?"

"True fiddlestick's ends," said Colonel Fitzrobert. "The only thing true about those

fellows, is, that they do not play sham-Abraham. They love gold,—will have gold, —will only vote where there is gold,—will vote for the most gold, — and have fleeced Sir Edward famously, I 'll answer for it. Let who will start for Warnstable, he must have his purse in his hand, and well lined, and leave purse, lining, and all behind him. I 'll bet you a new beaver, Burroughs, that Sir Edward has not come in for less than 4,000*l.*"

"Four thousand pounds!" ejaculated Lord Swainton. "Indeed he has not; — and, without violating secrecy, it has cost him much more."

"It is too dear for me," said Burroughs; "we must all bribe in our turn, and we all know it, Tories, Whigs, and Radicals; but my bribing days are over: we shall soon have the word Reform like claps of thunder around our heads — and, then, adieu to the Warnstable electors; or, at least, to their peculations. Four thousand pounds for a borough seat for, at most, six months! You have paid dearly for your whistle, Sir Edward."

Sir Edward smiled, and said, "It was of no importance."

"Oh, I know it is of no importance to you," replied Burroughs; "but it is of some importance to those who must be satisfied with being retail bribers. If you, and men of your fortune, raise the price of votes in this manner, men of small fortunes and limited means will not be able to get into Parliament. Of course, they cannot stand county elections; that is quite out of the question. They can, therefore, only become candidates for borough seats; and if boroughs are sold at this rate, they must abandon their chances *there* also. To cure bribery entirely is impossible; but the ballot would go a great way towards it. It would surely be to the interest of our Whig and Tory families to reduce the price of votes. All parties should assist in this; and by so acting they would adjourn reform."

"But they would only adjourn it, Burroughs," said Sir William Wadsworth; "come it must, sooner or later; and for my part, I say, the sooner the better. I have no objection to spending money, or to distributing alms to the poor; but it 's an infamous shame that such places as Manchester should not return members to Parliament, and yet that

Gatton should. Such iniquities as these would condemn any system. As to the Duke, with his best of all possible systems, he 's an old woman, laid his last egg at the battle of Waterloo, and should live on his pension and be quiet. It is mind, and not soldiers that must march now; and before this time twelve-months we shall see what we shall see."

"You will see a reformed parliament," said Lord Nonpareil; "and my friend Colonel Fitzrobert, I hope, at the Horse Guards."

"I am sure I shall have no objection," replied the Colonel. "I think it is our turn now, eh, Lord Swainton? You have now feathered your nests for about five-and-twenty years, till we all look like birds moulting. The spirit of the constitution is violated when one party sticks to office so long as this. A cabinet becomes as hereditary as the monarchy, and Goulburn, Herries, and Hardinge may bequeath their places by their wills or codicils. I confess, however, I do not see a reformed parliament quite so near as Lord Nonpareil."

"And pray what would be your plan of reform?" asked Sir Edward Clapperton of Sir

William Wadsworth, who sat opposite him at table.

"Disfranchise the rotten boroughs — create as many new constituencies as those disfranchised — be satisfied, in the first instance, with forty-shilling freeholders — and shorten the parliaments, and establish the ballot. We shall not get all this, perhaps, for seven years to come, and more than this, not for double that length of time. I am for universal suffrage, triennial parliaments, and the ballot, with an abolishment of all pecuniary qualifications on the part of members of parliament; but until some sweeping reform or revolution shall shake property to its centre, it would be madness to dream of such a system being adopted. I am for taking five shillings in the pound as soon as we can get it, and then renew our hostilities and demands until we obtain five shillings more, until at last we gain both capital and interest.

Lord Swainton had hitherto taken no part in the conversation which was proceeding; but at last he exclaimed,—

"Beggars description! Do you know, Sir William Wadsworth, who have the greatest

number of rotten boroughs in the kingdom ?"

"Certainly, my lord. The Whigs! But what then? The Radicals are not asking that the Whigs may be satisfied — but that justice may be done. We know that a very niggardly reform would suit them. We should wring out of the Duke and Sir Robert, if we had only to contend with them, a much more liberal reform bill than we should obtain from the Whigs; but the old Whig families will support the Tories in their opposition to our demands, for the best of all reasons, that they are personally interested in keeping the rotten boroughs untouched. If the Whigs get into power, they would then join us, make as large concessions as they could to secure our support, and throw off their recent alliance with Sir Robert and his backers. This would secure them some years of government; and then they must trust, as we all must do, to the chapter of accidents.

"The truth is," said Lord Swainton, "Whigs and Tories are alike interested to oppose you, as long as possible; for all the landed property of the country is in

their hands. Any concession made to you must be contrary to the interests of the two great parties in the state. Your section, Sir William, is not a party; it is only, as yet, a faction. You have few great men belonging to you. The middling classes distrust you. The landed interests and clergy abominate you. The poorer classes do not, as yet, understand you; and those who do, fear for their wages; and your section is only important from the preponderance it may give in the Commons to one or other of the two great parties."

"I am fully aware of that," replied Sir William Wadsworth; "and in that precisely consists our strength. If we vote against the Whigs on any measure of insufficient reform they may propose, we shall secure the continuance of the Duke and Sir Robert in office. If, on the contrary, we should support them, we might be able, together, to carry some declaratory resolutions, pledging the House to some future measure, and driving the Tories to take some step to preserve their places. If the Tory measure were then brought forward, and it should not satisfy us, we could

aid the Whigs to throw it out, and secure their return to power. Our position, then, is magnificent; and if our party is well managed, it may accomplish miracles."

"Never," said Lord Swainton, "with the present House of Commons. Our party is too strong to be defeated by the joint efforts of you and the Whigs. In a new House, if the Radicals should add to their numbers, the state of things would be different, as I am satisfied that the Conservative Whigs, and the very moderate reforming party, will add to their strength materially at the next dissolution: but in the present House, the Whigs and Radicals, separate or combined, are comparatively useless. Your party, at any rate, and under all circumstances, may be called the "excluded;" for never will you reach power, unless the monarchy indeed should be uprooted.

"God forbid!" exclaimed Sir Edward; "that would be a dismal day for all parties."

"So you think now," said Sir William; "but revolutions always look blacker before than afterwards."

"Not always, Sir William," observed Lord Swainton; "and indeed the history of man-

kind has shown that the greatest of all calamities to princes and people, to nobles and peasants, are revolutions. Very few in the history of the world can be compared to that of 1688."

"Revolutions are great moral tempests," said Burroughs; "they are as essential to the well-being of society, as storms and tempests are to public health, and to the salubrity of the atmosphere. But for these storms, we should all be swept away by fevers, cholera, and infection; and but for these political or moral tempests, we should all be covered with moral mildew and political vermin. Taxation would become excessive and arbitrary; political rights would be denied; men would become slaves. The will of one would be the law of millions, and there would be no progress in human society; but all would become, first, malaria — and then death."

"But sometimes," said Lord Swainton, "they are great scourges, and instead of purifying the atmosphere, they carry with them, like the monsoon, fire, havoc, and death. The English are not made for revolutions. They are too serious and too energetic."

"Any reform bill," said Lord Nonpareil, "would raise the prices of seats, instead of diminishing them; because any reform bill, at least that could pass the Houses of Parliament, would tend to excite a greater demand for seats: wholly new classes of candidates would come forward; mercantile men, literary men, men of small fortunes, and ready speaking talent would be candidates; all hoping to be heard, and by means of a seat in Parliament to make their way in the world. In such a country as England, the more you increase the chances of obtaining seats for all classes, the greater will be the demand, and the higher will be the prices of the votes."

Sir William Wadsworth observed "that he hoped to see the day that bribery would be impossible, from the largeness of the constituencies. At county elections," he added, "there was a great deal of treating, he knew, but very little bribery."

"At that rate," said Lord Swainton, "you must have all large constituencies; for whilst there are small ones, there must and will be bribery. Tories, Whigs, Radicals, all bribe and all are bribed at borough or city elections;

and this is universally admitted by all those who know anything about the matter." No one replied.

Sir Edward Clapperton heard these admissions with surprise.

"This is a strange world into which I have entered," he said to himself, "where Whigs, Tories, and Radicals all admit corruption, and even plead that it is necessary."

The dinner went off admirably; and the evening party commenced. There was some quadrilling, a good deal of playing, and not a little downright gambling. Lady Muchberry played with the rest, and gained more from her guests than wines, dinners, or lights, had cost her. The Miss Clappertons were no parties to these amusements. Captain Macfarlane, George Catherwood, and Sir Felix Montague were assiduous in their attentions to the ladies whom they accompanied; and Lord Swainton danced one quadrille with Miss Charlotte.

Sir Edward was charmed with the party, and, with Lady Muchberry's consent, begged Sir William Wadsworth, Mr. Burroughs, and Colonel Fitzrobert, if they remained at Bath

over the morrow, to join Lord Nonpareil and her ladyship, as well as some other friends, at his party in Milsom Street. They all accepted the invitation; and about midnight Lady Muchberry, who was in admirable spirits at her success at cards, was left alone to her guineas and her reflections. "One good turn deserves another," thought her ladyship. "Swainton is rich now; I must make up to him. He would be glad, I should think, to have a woman like myself to manage his affairs and give a tone and air to his establishment. It is impossible he can be such a fool, at his time of life, to think of marrying such a child as Miss Clapperton. I must talk to Scrope when he comes back. He is by far the most sensible person in the Cramwell or Swainton family, and he must see the impropriety of his father marrying a girl, however amiable, and however delightful. Nonpareil might do for her very well, though he is too old; but still there must be ten years' difference between the ages of Swainton and Nonpareil. I did not see that Swainton paid Miss Charlotte any great attention, indeed; though this may be a mere act of duplicity on his part to deceive me; for he is

as sly a fox as ever I met with in my long experience. I and Swainton, Nonpareil and Miss Charlotte, and Montague, if it must be so, with Sophia; all this would be very well. Who in the world would do for Sir Edward? He's a fine handsome fellow. I think Lady Charlotte Dowling would be just the thing. Unfortunately she's an out and out Whig, and so are all her family; but this is of very little consequence after all, for it would be very easy for her to induce Sir Edward to change his party. He is not a pledged man yet. He has come in for Warnstable, not as a party man, but as the poor man's candidate. Lady Charlotte is a beautiful thing, and it is just possible he might fall in love with her. I must see about this. I wonder whether I shall find a competitor for his hand and fortune in one of Swainton's girls. I should think not. They tell me Lady Arabella is a good-looking person, but not half so lovely as Lady Charlotte Dowling. We shall see what is to be done;" and with these thoughts she closed her eyes.

"When do you think of taking your seat, Sir Edward?" asked Lord Swainton, as

they proceeded in the same carriage homewards.

"Oh, not for another week, my lord," replied Sir Edward. "I count upon some more happy days in Milsom Street before we break up for the time being; and I do not intend remaining longer than a week in London. I pledged myself to my sisters to be as much with them as possible; and I do not purpose being at all regular in my attendance at the House before the middle of March."

"You will play the part of a truant, then, will you?" asked his lordship laughingly. "Mind your electors do not send Sam Pocock, or drunken Tom, with a rod or a stick to beat you. Still I do not think any measure of importance will come on for discussion before that time."

A few minutes afterwards they arrived at Milsom Street, and Lord Swainton was left in his room to his own meditations.

"I hope Scrope will be here by this time tomorrow night," said his lordship; "and I trust the fact of Lord Warminster dying intestate is as true as that of his death. As to his death, that is beyond all doubt, after the

letter I received to-day from Arabella. Our letters crossed. But she says nothing respecting his property except, 'I have not heard one word as to any will.' Yet they wrote to her for my address, and I shall, I suppose, have a letter in a day or two. All this looks favourable. Yet it is strange that so old a man as Lord Warminster should leave to the last moment the preparation of his will. Still he was the most procrastinating man I ever met with. I shall not forget the story of his procrastination in procuring a passport when he went to Rotterdam, until within half an hour of the steam-boat sailing, and then being without money as well as passport. I have heard several odd things of him to the same effect. It is, then, by no means improbable that he forgot his will also. No one would dare to mention it to him; and it is very probable that The Times, and other papers, are right. I must in that case look after a house here until all shall be ready at Ware Park; assemble my scattered children; and see if my Arabella cannot, aided by the god of love, young Cupid, and his bow and arrows, lodge a dart deep in the heart of Sir Edward. Capital son-

in-law! Good fellow! Beggars description!" and his lordship went to sleep.

The next day each followed his own fancy. Sir Edward took a long ride on horseback, accompanied by young Catherwood. Captain Macfarlane held the worsteds and silks of Miss Lucy on extended hands, whilst she wound them off on cards or counters. Sir Felix played *solitaire* with Miss Sophia. Lord Swainton chatted with Charlotte, and helped her to cut out some very pretty things in paper, which looked for all the world like the god of love running away with a heart; at least, so said his lordship. Then they walked on the parades. Then they called on Lady Muchberry; and, finally, all assembled at five to dress for an early dinner at seven.

"We have spent a nice, quiet, delicious morning," said Sir Felix to Sophia.

"Delightful indeed!" was her reply, as she looked up with half-closed eyes to her gay flatterer.

"These hours will be always regarded as amongst the most happy of my life," added Sir Felix.

"You are very good," replied Sophia.

And how far these mutual civilities might have proceeded it is not difficult to imagine; but that Charlotte said, "Sophia, we must prepare for dinner, love;" and Sophia sighed once more, and said, "I must leave you, Sir Felix."

"I hope it 's all true," said Sir Felix to himself, "about Swainton's fortune. I know, if it is, I may rely on him for a secret advance of a few thousands on my reversionary interest on my father's death; but my father must not know of it; and with these in my possession I would speak to her brother, and pop the question. All depends on Scrope's answer to-night, or early to-morrow. I do not see, however, the possibility of his returning before to-morrow, since when he arrived in town neither lawyers nor bankers would be visible. Hope! Hope! Hope! thou anchor of the mind, come to my aid! for, by Jupiter Ammon! I have little else to support me."

The dinner was regal. The conversation turned on Bath, its former splendour, its comparative decay, its theatre, and so forth; and the ladies took their part in the miscellaneous chat of the party.

"Have you been very gay this season?" asked Sir William Wadsworth of Miss Sophia. "I presume not, though, by your sable garments."

"We should have been very gay, I believe," she replied, "but that a provoking cousin of ours took it into his head to die, and *would* leave us a large fortune, just at the very time we did not want it."

"I wish a few cousins would provoke me in the same sort of style," said Sir William; "they might die when they would, in season, or out of season, it would always be seasonable to me. All my relations live for ever; great Goths as they are!"

"We were not at all intimate with our cousin," said Sophia; "and were not even aware that he was ill. My brother had made all his arrangements for a most delightful season here; and now I fear we shall get classed among the dowdies."

"That is impossible," replied Sir William; "you can never belong to *that* class.

"Sir Felix," said Sophia, "do you hear that? You will not say so, will you?"

Sir Felix looked all tenderness, and asked,

"What would I not say in *your* favour, Miss Sophia?"

Sophia was enchanted; and as compliments rung their varied changes in her ears, first from Sir William, and then from Sir Felix, she hardly knew which most charmed her, except it was the last.

The evening was principally devoted to music and quadrilles; but Sophia waltzed with Sir William Wadsworth, and Sir Felix with Miss Charlotte. Lord Swainton was less gay than usual. He began to be anxious. Eleven o'clock had sounded, and the hands were advancing towards midnight. Ten hours were enough to convey Scrope from London to Bath in a chariot and four. If the news was good, this was to be his mode of travelling. Supposing he saw no one on the night of his arrival, still he would early the next morning; and two or three hours were sufficient to transact his business. These were Lord Swainton's reflections as the clock moved onwards, and the chimes struck twelve.

"The Honourable Scrope Cramwell has just arrived, and wishes to see your lordship immediately," said Sir Edward's servant to

Lord Swainton at that very moment; and his lordship rose, to hear from his son, not only his fate, but that of the whole family.

"All right, my father, all right!" said Scrope, as his lordship entered the hall; "only instead of 30,000*l.*, the estates are worth 35,000*l.* per annum. Here are your 3,000*l.* Coutts's were most polite. The lawyers as civil as lawyers will be, when they hope the heir will employ them as his solicitors. And now, as I am knocked up with excitement and travelling, I will say good night! My dear little Peggy I had a line from, and she is in raptures. Good night!"

Lord Swainton returned to the drawing-room; his face was radiant with joy; he looked once more an English nobleman. In a few moments something seemed to have passed through his mind that had released him from the trammels, and yoke, burdens, and disgrace which had oppressed him.

"Sir Felix," said his lordship, in a loud tone of voice, "Scrope informs me the estates of Lord Warminster are estimated at 35,000*l.*, not 30,000*l.* per annum; and that he has indeed and truly died intestate."

Every one in the room, including George Catherwood, went up to his lordship to congratulate him. The dancing was abandoned: odd stories of Lord Warminster were related by Sir William Wadsworth, who knew him well, by Lord Swainton, and by Colonel Fitzrobert. His dying intestate surprised none of them. It was quite in harmony with the other features of his character. About one the party separated. Sir William expressed how happy he should be to meet Sir Edward in London. Colonel Fitzrobert begged Sir Edward would make his house his home when he ran up to London; and all separated most happily, and full of bright hopes and agreeable anticipations.

"Beggars description!" said his lordship, as he once more returned to his quiet, comfortable bed-room. "'Richard's himself again!' The past has taught me severe lessons, from which in future I shall do well to profit. I will never play another game of hazard as long as I live. Nothing but the most intolerable stupidity on my part can again place me in a situation of pecuniary difficulty or annoyance. I have done with gaming for the rest of my

life. With this good resolution I will place my head on my pillow, and say good night to all the world. Beggars description!"

The next morning Lord Swainton rose early. He called Scrope; went into his room and learnt some details respecting the interviews he had had with Messrs. Pilkington and Watts, the solicitors of Lord Warminster, and with Messrs. Coutts the bankers. His lordship was invited by the friends and female relatives of the late lord to attend his funeral. He died at his house in London, in Parliament Street; but this mansion was leasehold property, and subject to a heavy rent. Only a few days previous to his death, he had said to Mr. Pilkington, "You must come and dine with me, Pilkington, some day next week, and take instructions for my will. I am getting an old man, you know." Mr. Pilkington replied, "Whenever your lordship shall fix, I will attend on you." That was the last time he saw him. The next time he was a corpse. The personal property of his lordship was also very considerable, though, of course, only a portion belonged to Lord Swainton.

"I will settle 2000*l.* a-year and the lodge on

you," said his lordship, "and on your wife and children after you. God Almighty has been very good to allow me to live to see such days as these. I feared I should descend to the grave, leaving you little more than my title and my blessing; I am rejoiced indeed that it is otherwise. Give me your hand. Beggars description!"

Scrope held out his hand with corresponding warmth of feeling; and it is not to their discredit to say that their eyes were moistened with a tear or two of heartfelt affection.

"Montague! Montague!" said his lordship, knocking at Sir Felix's door precisely at nine o'clock; "it is nine — the hour I promised for our interview. I am waiting to see you."

Montague was waiting too, but he did not dare to knock at his lordship's door, lest he should be considered importunate.

"What shall I do for you?" asked his lordship of Montague. "You have been my companion in many a difficulty, helped me through many a scrape, been witness to many an embarrassment, and shared with me, very often indeed, your last five pound note. I am now at your disposal. My lawyers and

bankers are willing to make me any advances I desire; and on estates worth 35,000*l.* per annum I can procure everything necessary to clear myself, and you too, of embarrassments. But I can do nothing till you have come to the same resolution as myself. You must renounce gaming. I have come deliberately to this determination. Without this step be taken by you as well as by myself, this amazing windfall will be of no use. I am anxious to help you; but it would be an act of injustice to this family, who have treated us with such confidence and affection, if you made an offer to Sophia with the secret intention of continuing gaming."

"I am as sick of it as yourself, my lord," said Montague; "and I vow before Heaven to have done with the dice for ever!"

"What will clear you?" asked Lord Swainton.

"Three thousand pounds," replied Sir Felix.

"And then you will have your allowance of 700*l.* a-year from your father clear of incumbrances," observed his lordship.

"Precisely so."

"They are yours," said Lord Swainton: "I

owe them to you. You have given me your signature, your time, your everything. I owe them to you; and I only pay a debt in paying you that sum."

"Not a debt," replied Sir Felix. "Anything but that. I will borrow them now. At the death of my old aunt Kate, I hope to repay them, even should the governor live on."

"No," said his lordship, "that must not be. You will want at least 5000*l.* The other 2000*l.* I *will* lend you; and you shall repay me when aunt Kate shall be no more, if your father lives on."

"God bless you, Swainton!" said Sir Felix. "Now if Sir Edward will give his consent to my marriage with Sophia, I am happy for life."

"On this point," replied his lordship, "take my advice. We are guests of Sir Edward. He feels himself under obligations to us; and in truth he is so. To press for his consent now would be indelicate. Let the girl understand you love her, and that will be sufficient for the moment; but say nothing to Sir Edward till he shall be in London: you will be much more likely to succeed then. The girls

have such unbounded confidence in him, that without his consent they would do nothing. He is an admirable fellow, and I shall love him as long as I live."

"I will follow your advice," said Sir Felix; "though young Wadsworth was rather smitten, I think."

"Oh, not he," replied his lordship; "he is not a marrying man. He has lots of admirers everywhere; and he knows it."

The breakfast-table, as usual, was a scene of festive mirth; and Scrope and Sir Felix, who were in most extraordinary high spirits, prolonged the moment of leaving it with their stories, riddles, and enigmas. Lord Swainton also was most lively and agreeable.

"One or two words with you, my good friend," said his lordship to Sir Edward as they left the breakfast-table. "Let us take possession of the dining-room for a few minutes, and put all the ladies to flight. We have not squared our accounts yet," said his lordship most gaily: "I have some money to hand you back."

"To hand *me* back!" said Sir Edward in a tone of the most extreme surprise. "I sup-

pose you mean that I have to hand over to your lordship. I ought to have spoken to you myself, but I feared offending you, as we made our wager of 7000*l.*"

"No, no," replied Lord Swainton; "I have examined all the accounts, looked over every voucher, and I have 2000*l.* to return to you."

"What for, my lord?" asked Sir Edward. "We made a wager. You took all risks. If the balance had been against me——"

"I should have asked for it," replied his lordship.

"Oh, I doubt that much, my lord," said Sir Edward.

"Indeed I should, Sir Edward."

"I hope your lordship is not in earnest," replied Sir Edward; "it would grieve me much if you were so. We made a wager. Your lordship took the risk upon yourself. It was a game of hazard, and it has turned up a prize. So much the better for you. If it had turned up otherwise, it would have been so much the better for me; for your lordship would have paid, I know you would, the extra expenses."

"And I trust you do not intend, Sir Ed-

ward, to offer me 2000*l.* as a present for my exertions and devotedness to your cause."

"What's to be done, my lord?" asked Sir Edward with evident embarrassment. "I cannot receive the 2000*l.*"

"And I cannot retain it," said his lordship.

"Then I have thought of something that will please us both. Captain Smallman leaves us to-morrow. Let us place this 2000*l.* in the three per cents. for his benefit, in our joint names, and remit him half-yearly his dividends."

"You are a noble fellow, Sir Edward," said his lordship, who opened the door, and called "Smallman."

The Captain entered.

"There's a balance of 2000*l.* cash on the election accounts, my dear captain," said Sir Edward: "Lord Swainton says it belongs to me; I say it belongs to him; and I am sure it does. I know your position, estimate your character, and wish to see you quite happy. His lordship will not retain the 2000*l.*, and I will not receive it. What is to be done with it? We cannot throw it into the fire. We have come to the conclusion, therefore, to

place it in our joint names in the three per cents. for your benefit during life,—and at your disposal by will."

"What for? why? what have I done? Really, this is impossible!"

"I hope not," said Sir Edward; "you will make me happy if you consent. I know, from a quarter of which you have no idea, that a portion of your half-pay is appropriated by you, and has been, in spite of all your pecuniary annoyances, to the support of the orphan child of your only and departed sister. Besides which, I am aware how badly you have been treated by your family."

The captain blushed deeply.

"Smallman," said Lord Swainton, "I never knew that before. Give me your hand."

The captain held out his hand, and Lord Swainton placed in it the 2000*l.* in two notes of 1000*l.* each.

"I really cannot, my lord,—I cannot."

"Nonsense,—nonsense," replied his lordship; "now give them to Sir Edward, and he will purchase, on his arrival in London, three per cent. stock with them, in his and my joint names."

"I am the happiest dog breathing," said Sir Edward, with true simplicity and sincerity.

"Not the happiest, Sir Edward," replied the captain, "but one of them; I think, I am the happiest."

Sir Edward soon after left his lordship; and calling his sisters to the breakfast parlour, spoke in terms of the highest enthusiasm of this last act of Lord Swainton's conduct.

"He is the most perfect pattern of a man I ever met with," said Sir Edward; "and if I had a thousand sisters, I would give them all to him."

"And one to Sir Felix," said Sophia, laughingly; and then they all separated. What passed afterwards must be reserved to the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

Thou art an old love-monger, and speakest skilfully.
SHAKSPEARE.

Love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE next morning was remarkably fine, and an excursion to Bristol, proposed the previous day by Lord Swainton, was carried into effect. Captain Smallman consented, at the request of Sir Edward, again to defer his departure. The two family carriages and the newest post chariot were put in requisition: in the first were Sir Edward and Miss Clapperton, Lord Swainton and Lady Muchberry; in the second, Miss Sophia, Miss Lucy, Sir Felix Montague, and Captain Macfarlane; and in the post chariot, Scrope, Captain Smallman, and George Catherwood. They all drove to the Full Moon, drew largely on the good things of the

inn, both larder and cellar, and then set out in a most formidable band to visit the cathedral.

"There lie the mortal remains of Sterne's Eliza," said his lordship to Miss Clapperton, pointing to the elegant monument of Mrs. Draper, — and his lordship then gave an elegant and eloquent description of her.

"But I have something to say to you, Miss Charlotte," observed his lordship, in a cheerful and happy tone: "I want a wife. You are young and I am old. There is a great difference in our ages; but my spirits are good, my health excellent, my fortune ample; I can introduce you to the first society, make you mistress of some fine estates, and devote to you the remaining years of my life. I am neither young nor handsome; but, if I know anything of myself, I have a kind heart, and I feel I should love your society, and make you happy."

Charlotte trembled. It was not that she was wholly unprepared for such an overture; but she felt that her future destiny now depended on her reply.

"Oh, my lord, how droll you are! I never

heard anything so odd; but have you spoken to my brother?" asked Charlotte. "You know, we have no father, and we look up to him in all such matters. He is so good, — so kind, — so affectionate, — that we do not conceal a thought from him."

"No, I have not," said his lordship. "You know, I do not propose to marry your brother, but to marry you. There is so great a disparity between your age and mine, that I could not think of asking him for his influence. If we had both been young together, I should have spoken first to him, but until I know whether you would consent to marry a man old enough to be your father, it would have been useless to have troubled him for either his opinion or approbation."

Charlotte made no reply.

"Silence gives consent, young lady," said his lordship; "you can make me the happiest of men. I place myself entirely at your disposal. All that I have is yours, and perhaps my reading and knowledge may often wile away a dull hour, and contribute to your improvement, as well as to your happiness. I am gay, cheerful, fond of society; and what you

have seen me to be since I first had the satisfaction of beholding you, you will find me always to the last hour of my life."

"Well, you must consult my brother," said Charlotte, cheerfully; "I must be guided by him."

"Charming creature! delightful being! I adore you!" said his lordship; but Charlotte stopped him by saying,

"They will hear you — I am sure they will. Speak to Edward."

This was sufficient for Lord Swainton. His age presented no obstacle in the opinion of Charlotte; and he knew full well, that since the death of Lord Warminster intestate, all pecuniary objections were out of the question.

"What are you saying to Miss Clapperton?" asked Lady Muchberry of his lordship. "You are looking as sly as an old fox. Some of your odd stories, I suppose. Some of those amusing tales which have kept me awake nights together thinking of them, years and years ago, when you made your court to me, my lord. I wonder whether you have forgotten those days?"

"Forgotten them, my lady!" exclaimed his

lordship; "how can I ever forget them? Were they not among the sunniest moments of my past life? That was the time of the Marchioness of Swanshire, the Countess of Hartwell, the Duchess of Marble Hall."

"Yes," replied her ladyship; "and of Lady Quickborough, with whom you used to flirt so awfully; and of Lady Fortbury, and of the Countess of Steepdeen."

"And do not forget the Duchess of Counterpoint and Major Shovell, the Duchess of Dimples and Sir Joseph Binks," said his lordship; "nor poor Captain Beauchamp."

"Ah! those were the days for Bath," sighed her ladyship. "I seem to resemble the last woman, and you must feel like the last man, when you think of departed beauty, fashion, and fame."

"My thoughts are less gloomy," replied his lordship. "I am as great an admirer of your sex, my lady, and of yourself too, as I was thirty years ago. I have all my energy, character, peculiarities, and life, and when surrounded by angels, as I am to-day, I am as happy and light-hearted as when we romped together at Steepdeen."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Lady Muchberry, "I really believe you. I never knew such a man. Take care of your hearts, ladies, for his lordship is a dangerous man. If he were twenty years younger I should be jealous of him; but I think I may trust him now. Poor Nonpareil always says, 'Swainton is the only man who cuts me out. You are always talking of his good sayings and his wondrous doings when he is here.' I assure you, my lord, you have nearly broken poor Nonpareil's heart; he will have it that I neglect him when you are at Bath. Poor fellow! He's a good creature,— but he wants the wit and animation of some one I know, to please me altogether."

"This is a dead set at me," said Lord Swainton to himself as he heard Lady Muchberry's declarations of admiration and esteem. "What is to be done?"

"You are very amiable, very kind, very generous," replied his lordship; "but you must not set me down for an old man just yet. We are still in our teens, my lady; I shall be a lad at ninety. What say you?"

"Oh! I often say to my niece that I feel young enough in heart to skip over the moon;

but I question whether my legs would carry me as far. I am as full of life, nerve, activity as ever. I can see to read the smallest print at the greatest distance; could walk from hence to St. Vincent's rock and back without the smallest fatigue; could dance thirty sets of quadrilles without sitting down between them; could follow the fox hounds if I dared, and leap ditches, fences, and ha-has with any of you; would go up in a balloon with Mr. Green, or anybody else; and play Lady Macbeth or Juliet quite as well as I did at Steepdeen, now five-and-twenty years ago."

"Beggars description!" said his lordship; "your ladyship is as perennial as Hope and as evergreen as the laurel. Nonpareil is the happiest man in the world to possess the friendship of such a woman; I am sure he thinks so."

"But Nonpareil puts me out of humour," said her ladyship, who was resolved, *coûte qui coûte*, on making Lord Swainton understand that she now vastly preferred him to Lord Nonpareil. "He is so prosy; always repeating the same stories; nothing new, nothing of

life about the man: for my part, I like a bit of a rake, like your lordship or Lord Lyttonworth."

Charlotte heard this declaration with some surprise, and said to herself, "Well, I know not if this be fashionable life and fashionable manners; but if that is the case they are both very disgusting. Why Lady Muchberry does all but ask his lordship to propose to her! I wonder what he will say."

She had not to wonder long, for his lordship said in a rallying tone,

"Come, come, Lady Muchberry, you must not quiz me quite so severely either. I am a good-natured sort of fellow, and never was vexed with a woman in my life, and never shall be; but Nonpareil's praises have been on your lips for many a long day when I was in disgrace, you know."

"Oh! lovers' quarrels, mere lovers' quarrels between you and I, my lord; never anything more," said her ladyship: "fight and scratch, and then kiss and make it up again."

Poor Charlotte had no idea of such lovers' quarrels as those described by Lady Muchberry; but she felt increasingly how strange was the conduct of her ladyship.

"Very true," replied his lordship; "and so I hope it will always be between us, my lady; a few words to part, but a few more to meet again." And then changing the tone of his voice, he said, "Now we are at Bristol, Sir Edward, I think we should take the ladies in the carriages to the Hot Wells." The proposal was highly approved, and an hour was spent most agreeably at Clifton.

"I shall soon be leaving you," said Sir Felix most pensively as he walked with Sophia over the delightful village of Clifton, delightful at all seasons, and peculiarly so on a splendid frosty day like that on which this excursion was made by the happy guests of Milsom Street; "but wherever I am, my thoughts, my affections, my heart will be ever with you. You are the being I had pictured to myself, but had not discovered; imagined but not realized. Soul, heart, beauty, intellect, grace, — everything that can render woman the perfection of creation. Can you love me, my dear Sophia?"

Sophia said, "Oh don't, Sir Felix; I beseech of you, don't."

"You are my angel! my idol! my soul's

happiness! I can live and die only for you!" replied Montague. "Can you love me?"

"Perhaps I could," replied Sophia; "I cannot say. But you have not spoken to my brother. He is our papa and guardian, our beloved friend, and everything."

"Not everything henceforward, I hope, my dear Sophia," said Sir Felix; "he is a noble, glorious fellow, and I love him sincerely; but henceforth *I* must be everything to you."

Sophia sighed: she was in love; she strived but little to dissemble the fact. Sir Felix was her *beau idéal* of a gentleman, and she at once approved and delighted in her choice.

"I have something to tell you, my dear Edward," said Charlotte to her brother, on their arrival at Milsom Street. "His lordship has spoken to me, and I told him to speak to you;" and away she scampered out of the room.

"Oh, Charlotte, what do you think?" asked Sophia, as they were dressing for dinner.

"Why, what should I think?" replied Charlotte, "except that Sir Felix has told you what we all know, that he is over head and ears in love with you."

"Precisely so," said Sophia. "Oh, how dreadful it is!"

"Not very dreadful," replied Charlotte; "at least if I may judge from my own case."

"Well, if I did not think so," said Sophia. "I told Lucy, when you were walking up and down the cathedral with his lordship, 'I am sure he is saying something to Charlotte.' But what will Edward say?"

"I am sure I don't know," replied Charlotte; "but I have told him, and told him too that I desired Lord Swainton to speak to him."

"Oh, I cannot tell Edward," said Sophia; "I couldn't for the world! I shall write him a letter when he is in London. How dreadful it is! Has Lucy told you about the captain?"

"What, has he been proposing, too? No, she has not told me a word."

"Well, she will then," said Sophia. "But he has written to Colonei Dawson to explain to him who he is, and what he is, and all about it; and Lucy says that if her father will consent she will marry him next month."

"I cannot make that out at all," replied Charlotte. "Lord Swainton is a wealthy peer;

Sir Felix is a finished gentleman, and will be a peer himself; and therefore, although there is a great disparity in our ages if we should accept them, it would easily be accounted for: besides which, I hate boys, and have always told you I would marry a man twice my own age. But the captain, though a most excellent man, has no chance of promotion, has not above 400*l.* a-year to live upon, at least so Edward says, and Lucy has no fortune at all. Then he is so much older than she is, and without any title, estates, or fortune to compensate for it."

"But what of that, Charlotte?" asked Sophia; "can any one account for the caprices of love? If we all set our hearts on the same men, or sort of men, what would become of the rest? The captain is very amiable, exceedingly well connected, and will make an excellent husband. Besides, Lucy has just told me that he has great expectations from his mother's family on the death of some old lady or other; and Lucy is mad to be married. As to Macfarlane, really it's quite disagreeable,—he does not take his eyes off her a single moment."

There was a knock at the door. It was Lucy.

"Has Sophia told you, Charlotte, all my adventures?" asked the pretty creature as soon as she entered the room.

"Oh yes, dear one! we were just talking of you. But what do you think has happened to me?"

"I guess," said Lucy; "Sophia and I felt certain we knew the very moment when it happened. All three of us in one day! Isn't it odd? I don't know what papa will say. The captain is very respectable, isn't he?"

"Nothing can be more so, my dear," replied Charlotte, "as far as conduct and family are concerned; but you know ——."

"Ah, I know all about that," said Lucy. "If he is poor, so am I,—we can't all be rich, love, like you and Lord Swainton. I suspect Sir Felix, however, has more wit than fortune for the present. As to the captain, he adores me, I am sure he does,—he tells me so."

"Ah, they all say that you know, Lucy," said Charlotte; "but certainly he appears to me very much in love with you."

"How delightful it would be, all to be married the same day," said Sophia.

"It would indeed," replied Lucy; "but you

must be quick about it. I should hate a long courtship."

The dinner-bell rang, and the ladies went to the drawing-room.

The next day Captain Smallman and Scrope left; and the party was thus much diminished.

"I must leave you, Sir Edward, to-morrow," said his lordship: "for I have such an arrear of business and affairs to attend to, that I must tear myself away from those I best love, in order to consult with lawyers, see administrators, visit Doctors' Commons, survey estates, and attend the funeral of Lord Warminster. I shall be at Long's in London. I wish to see you. I must have some talk with you, quite alone, *tête-à-tête*, and all that sort of thing; I must also arrange for you with our friends, who are to introduce you to the Speaker of the House of Commons. Why, I shall be as busy as the old gentleman in a gale of wind. Beggars description!"

"We will go up together," replied Sir Edward, "if your lordship is agreeable.

"Oh, I shall delight in that arrangement," replied his lordship, and preparations were made accordingly.

Though Charlotte and Sophia longed to know the decision or opinion of their brother, they both entreated their respective lovers not to speak to him till he was in London; so that all he had to say he might make known to them by letter.

"You are mine!" said Sir Felix; "mine, angelic creature!—mine, dearest Sophia!" as he took leave of her the next day. "I live but for you!—I exist only in the sunshine of your smiles, and all else is darkness and death!"

Sophia was enchanted. She loved him not less in return.

"You are all a pretty set of creatures," said Sir Edward, as he bade his sisters and Lucy adieu in the breakfast parlour. "So you are all three in love. I know all about it. I must begin and look out too. Adieu! adieu!" and himself, Lord Swainton, Sir Felix, Captain Macfarlane, and young Catherwood, left for London.

"I shall take my seat in the House of Commons behind Sir Robert," said Sir Edward to Lord Swainton, as they travelled in the old family carriage towards the metropolis, "he is the man to look to."

"Yes," said his lordship; "all parties re-

spect him, though of course all do not love him. He is an admirable leader, and managed that Emancipation affair most famously. He is a thorough parliamentary man. He would not act against the spirit of the constitution, not to secure himself office during the rest of his life. Few men are so well acquainted with the nature of a parliamentary government as Sir Robert. He is a most astonishing man. He has the debates of the last fifty years at his fingers' ends: studies Hansard more than any man breathing; and has, therefore, always cases analogous to the one under discussion to bring forward in support of his view of a case, or to defeat his opponent. Sir Robert may have hard battles to fight, and no doubt he will; but he will fight them boldly and bravely, and will always be looked up to as a prudent and able statesman.

"But his party does not forgive him for the Emancipation Bill," said the captain; "and never will. The truth is, he is now half a Whig; and is so looked on by the Rodens, Winchelseas, and Newcastles, of the Upper House; as well as by a large portion of the Tories in the House of Commons.

"Oh, that will wear off," replied his lordship; "Sir Robert is more necessary to our party than we are to him. His fine talents, his admirable mode of speaking, his business habits, the command he has of the House,—all these things will secure to him any position he may desire; unless, indeed, some popular movement should take place in France, or our good King should die; and then no one can tell what might happen; perhaps a revolution. Beggars description!"

"I hope not," said Sir Edward, most feelingly; for who is there upon earth can desire a revolution when young, handsome, wealthy, full of life, just elected an M.P., and full also of hope and a desire for fame? Lovers of revolutions are generally those who have nothing to lose and everything to gain by them. With Sir Edward the very reverse of this would have been the case, and it is not then astonishing that he hated the word "revolution."

On reaching London, Sir Edward, Lord Swainton, Sir Felix, and young Catherwood, proceeded to Long's. There his lordship discharged the account of Sir Felix, handed to the latter 200*l.* in compliance with former ar-

rangements, and closed the election accounts of Warnstable. He found a letter from Mr. Walter accepting 300*l.* in discharge of his bill, and a letter from Sir Oscar Morbleu, reminding him of the 100*l.* he had borrowed. Both the sums his lordship paid, and thus got rid of the whole of his pecuniary liabilities for Sir Edward Clapperton.

The next morning Sir Edward accompanied George Catherwood home.

"I have come myself, my dear Mrs. Catherwood," said Sir Edward, "to see with my own eyes, and hear with my own ears, all about dear Maria, and once more to try and prevail on you to visit us at Bath. I shall not be more than a week in town. I shall take my seat to-morrow. This day week I will call for you about ten—let me say so—in my carriage; and if you will spend a few weeks with us, my sisters will be delighted. Lucy is still with them, and will remain all the while we continue at Bath. We shall not quit before the fifteenth of March. Although our mourning naturally keeps us from many gaieties, we shall be quite gay enough to please you, I know; and shall be too happy if you will come."

"I will take you at your word, this time," replied Mrs. Catherwood; "because I know I can do so. The medical men advise a change of air for Maria. It will do her good. You will, doubtless, be often in London; and, perhaps, our society will add to the cheerfulness of your house during your absence."

Maria was divided in feeling when she heard this reply of her mother. She loved the Miss Clappertons, and enjoyed their society; and, if she dared, she loved some one else still more; but then she had the most rigid notions with respect to personal dignity, and feared, that by accepting the invitation, she would appear to Charlotte and Sophia as seeking to regain her influence over the mind and heart of Sir Edward. With such conflicting feelings she remained silent.

"I hope the visit will be agreeable to you, Maria?" asked Sir Edward.

"Oh, yes, very much so," she replied. "But do your sisters know of the invitation?"

"Certainly," said Sir Edward; "and, indeed, here is a letter from Charlotte, which I ought to have placed in your hands before."

Maria burst the seal. The letter was all she could desire. It was full of affection, confidence, and pure and warm friendship.

"What a delightful letter!" she exclaimed, as she finished its hasty perusal. "Do read it, mamma!"

"It is, indeed!" said Mrs. Catherwood, looking most kindly at Sir Edward. "Your family is the charm of my life: I shall accompany you with pleasure."

"I quite long to see Charlotte and Sophia," said Maria to Sir Edward. "They will have so much to tell me."

Sir Edward gave a short description of the festive scenes at Bath, since their return; but left George Catherwood the pleasing task, after his departure, of filling up the details. Sir Edward took leave; kept up the old custom of kissing both Mrs. Catherwood and Maria, and assured them how much he anticipated that day week.

"She is more and more beautiful every time I see her," said Sir Edward, as he rode back to Long's. "I don't know what she will come to at last. She really looked quite angelic. Her illness has added to her charms. I don't

wonder she refused young Price. If I were such a girl, I would refuse every one!"

The fact was, that Maria did look more lovely than ever. She was still also languid, pale, and interesting, though rapidly recovering; and these added to her other charms.

The next day Sir Edward took his seat, and the Marquis of Charmouth and Colonel Bell dined with him, Lord Swainton, and Sir Felix, at Long's. His parliamentary life had now commenced, and under most happy and brilliant auspices.

"I must have my promised chat with you, Sir Edward, to-morrow," said Lord Swainton, after the Marquis of Charmouth and Colonel Bell had left. "We will fix one o'clock."

"With all my heart," replied Sir Edward; and the next day, as the clock struck one, in entered his lordship.

"I am in love with your eldest sister," said his lordship.

"I am by no means astonished, my lord," replied Sir Edward. "She is one of the best creatures living. But, do you think she is old enough to be the step-mother of Scrope, and of all your other children? It would be

deplorable for my sister to enter even your family, my lord, as an unwelcome intruder."

"You are quite right, Sir Edward, in principle," said Lord Swainton; "but the fact is, that Scrope is decidedly in favour of the match. One of my other sons is in India, and will never live at home; and another, as you know, is married in Jamaica. My four girls have been scattered about rather of late years; but one is a widow, and I shall give her my marine villa, as she literally adores the sea; another is about, I hope, to be married. Arabella, — oh, the pretty creature! — may be I don't know whose wife, — but I know whose I wish she was;—and as to Dorothy, she will go and live with Amelia at the marine villa, for she is resolved on dying an old maid."

Sir Edward affected not to understand Lord Swainton's allusion to himself and Arabella, and said,

"So that your lordship cannot, in fact, interfere with the happiness or independence of your family by the marriage you propose?"

"Precisely so," replied his lordship; "and I have obtained the consent of your sister."

"Then what can I say, my lord," replied

Sir Edward, "but hope and pray, which I do most fervently, that the marriage may produce all the happiness either yourself or my sister can desire? Her fortune on marriage is 30,000*l.*; it is in the three per cents. Besides this, there is a freehold estate at Peckham. This is settled on herself and her children, by the will of my father."

"And so must the 30,000*l.* be," said his lordship; "and I will settle 100,000*l.* further, to be secured on the estates. Our lawyers will arrange the rest."

"But I have something else to ask of you," added his lordship; "it is to grant an interview to ——, who do you think?"

"Oh, I can guess, my lord," replied Sir Edward; "but here is a letter I should like to show you before Sir Felix makes his appearance."

Sir Edward placed in Lord Swainton's hand the anonymous letter which Sophia had received some weeks previously at Bath. Lord Swainton read it with some emotion.

"It is a disguised hand," said his lordship; "but I will find it out. I will wager my head that it was written by Nonpareil."

"By Lord Nonpareil?" asked Sir Edward, with astonishment. "That is a Whig trick, indeed!"

"But it is one that cannot remain unpunished," said his lordship, with great warmth. "Nonpareil must retract his own words, or he must fight a duel with Montague. There can be no half measures."

"It is a disgraceful act," observed Sir Edward; "but I hope Lord Nonpareil is no party to it."

"My head against a China orange, it is him," said his lordship; "and till this affair is cleared up, I shall decline introducing Sir Felix to you, as I had proposed to do at this moment. Excuse my leaving you an instant. I must show the letter to Montague."

"Do you think there is an absolute necessity for that?" asked Sir Edward. "It might lead to much unpleasant publicity: and who can tell but it might also lead to loss of life?"

"It is one of those acts of treason that cannot be passed over," said his lordship. "Nonpareil and Montague were bosom friends; and many acts of unmerited kindness has Sir Felix

performed for him. Under such circumstances, to write such a letter, is an act of too flagrant a character to admit of apology."

Lord Swainton left the room.

"Whose handwriting is this?" asked his lordship of Sir Felix, who was in the room below, waiting for Lord Swainton to announce to him that Sir Edward was ready to receive him.

"Why, it is Nonpareil's handwriting, to be sure, though very much disguised," replied Sir Felix. "But what then?"

"Read the letter, Montague," replied his lordship, "and tell me what I am to say to Sir Edward."

Sir Felix read the letter: he turned pale; trembled with indignation; and asked if he might keep it.

"What for?" asked Lord Swainton.

"Do you ask me what for?" replied Montague. "I thought you knew me better. He must come to London, and retract his own words; or he must give me that satisfaction which I have the right to demand."

"That is your only course," said Lord Swainton, who left the room to ask of Sir

Edward permission to lend Montague the letter.

Sir Edward did so with some reluctance, as he apprehended that Lord Nonpareil would refuse to give any explanation, but would prefer a duel to disgrace.

"Leave all this to Sir Felix, now," said his lordship. "When he shall have cleared his character, he will ask Sophia's hand in marriage."

Sir Edward felt that he could not interfere, though he half regretted he had shown the letter.

Lord Swainton now took leave of Sir Edward. Sir Felix left Long's Hotel two hours afterwards, for Bath, accompanied by his friend Colonel Paxworth. Lord Swainton was about to attend the next day at the funeral of Lord Warminster; and thence to proceed to Wiltshire, to look at his new estates.

"God bless you, Sir Edward," said his lordship, "I shall write to Charlotte by this night's post. I propose taking a house at Bath, for a month or six weeks, and having Arabella to see me."

"Mrs. Catherwood and her daughter are also coming to Milsom Street, on a visit," said

Sir Edward; "and we shall once more be gay again. I hope to be there on Thursday next.

"I will be there as soon after as possible," said his lordship; "and take care of your heart, Sir Edward, for my girl has a pair of eyes that may slay you. Beggars description!"

"I do not doubt it, my lord," replied Sir Edward; "but I am rather hard-hearted, you know."

"Yes, yes, adieu, hard-hearted Sir Edward," said his lordship, laughingly, as he left the hotel. "Such hard hearts as yours beggar description!"

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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